

# SPORT

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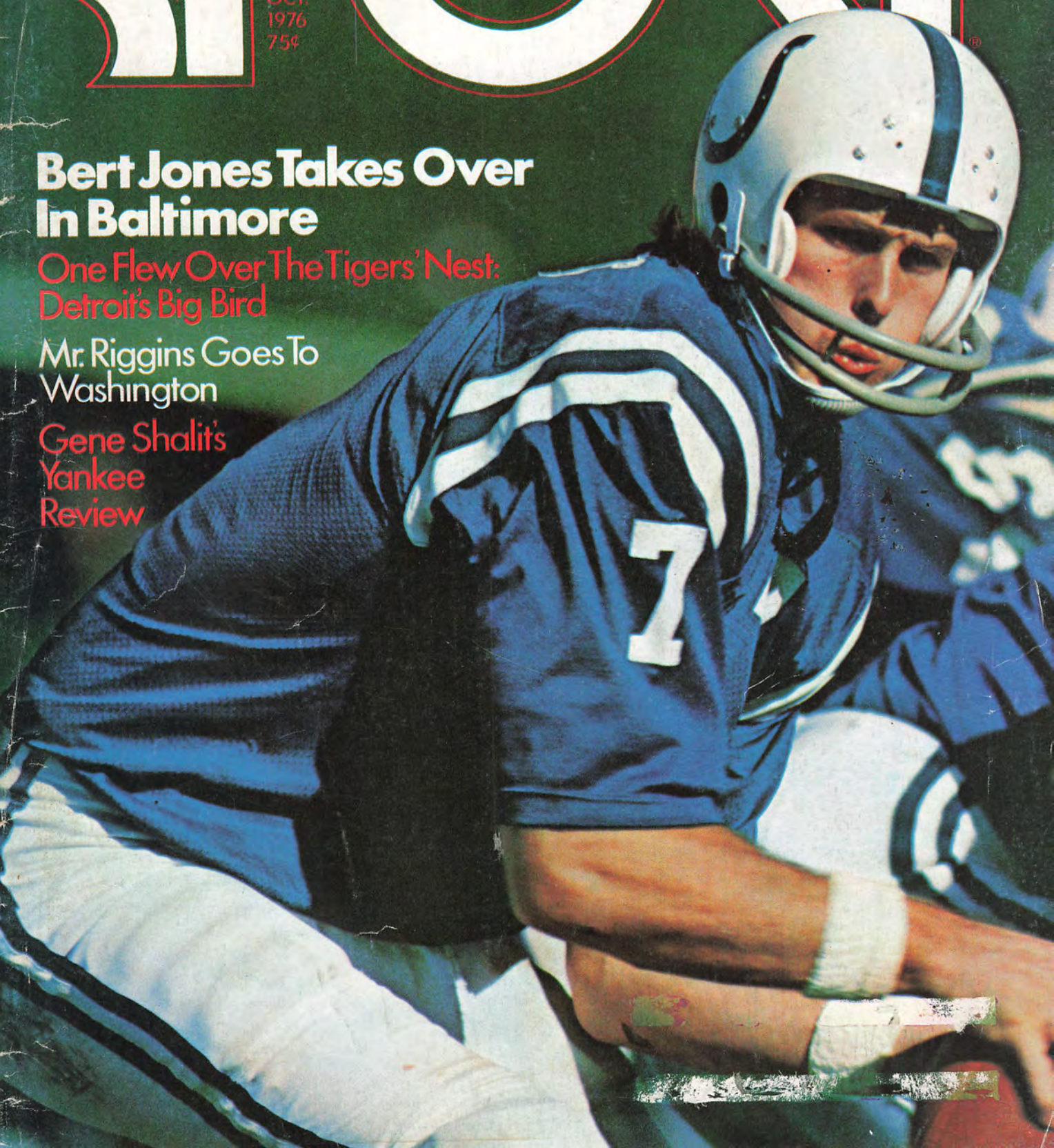
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## Bert Jones Takes Over In Baltimore

One Flew Over The Tigers' Nest:  
Detroit's Big Bird

Mr. Riggins Goes To  
Washington

Gene Shalit's  
Yankee  
Review





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# SPORT

30TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

OCT. 1976 VOL. 63, NO. 4

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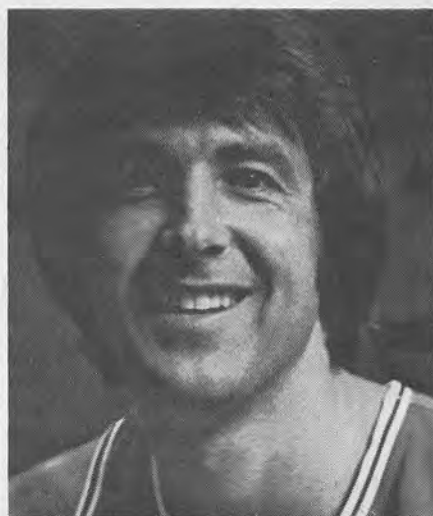
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**Bert Jones** CLIFTON BOUTELLE



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— Gail Goodrich

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# OCT. THIS MONTH IN SPORT



When our July issue went on sale a month before the Olympic Games began, only a small percentage of our readership recognized the man hurdling across the cover. Our cover line—*Who Is Bruce Jenner... And Why Is He The World's Greatest Athlete?*—could not have been more appropriate. But by the time the Olympics ended, hardly an American breathed who did not know Bruce Jenner's name and his wife's name (Chrystie) and his dog's name (Bertha). The saturation coverage of the Olympics had turned Jenner into an instant celebrity—along with Rumania's Nadia Comaneci and Cuba's Alberto Juantorena and Maryland's Sugar Ray Leonard and East Germany's Kornelia Ender. The celebrities—and the sidelights—were touched upon this month in my report from Montreal.

Writer John Devaney and his subject in this issue, Redskin John Riggins, have something in common besides their first names: A chilly relationship with Joe Namath. Riggins spells out in this month's

SPORT why he and Namath drifted apart, but Devaney has no idea why his once-friendly relationship deteriorated. Devaney wrote several articles in SPORT and a book about Namath, and almost all his words were complimentary. But a few years ago, Devaney walked into Bachelors III, the Manhattan saloon that Namath once owned, and discovered that the former proprietor was no longer talking to him. No conversation, no explanation from the Jet quarterback.

Devaney has managed to survive, anyway. His two latest books will be out any day now: *The Story of Basketball*, published by Random House, and *The Indianapolis "500": Complete Pictorial History*, published by Rand-McNally. Devaney's wife, Barbara, a graphics designer, collaborated with him on the Indy book; thankfully she is still talking to him.

Eight years ago, Larry L. King, the author of this month's profile of Bert Jones, wrote a story about an earlier Baltimore quarterback. The story, *Sure It Hurts When I Throw, It Hurts All The Time*, appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post*, and it was a fine story about age and pain. "Uuunnnh!" is the way the sound of the grunt looks on paper, but to hear it—involuntary, explosive, a sound conceived in pain and born of a sudden convulsion of ripped muscles—was to hear sandpaper grating across the brain. Johnny Unitas bent over, clutching his right arm, his helmeted head tucked almost between his legs. 'Oh, hell!' he said. 'God damn!' " King's study of Bert Jones is a story of youth and of pleasure.

In this issue, we are reviving our backpage column, a column that we hope will be the work of several different contributors. The first is by Robert Ward, whose work first popped up in SPORT only a few months ago (*Pete Rose & Joe Morgan Will Defend Their Championship To The Death and Why Bernie Carbo Dumped His Stuffed Gorilla... & Other Hairy Stories*). Paul Hemphill, once a regular on the back page and now a columnist for the San Francisco Examiner, promises a contribution soon.

*Dick Schaap*

# SPORT

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**Sport** Published Monthly by MVP Sports, Inc., a subsidiary of Bartell Media Corporation, New York, N.Y. 10022.

**Executive, Advertising and Editorial Offices** at 641 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. Raymond K. Mason, Chairman; John Norwood, President and Publisher; Dan McNamee, Circulation Manager; Richard E. Vincent, Advertising Director; Alfred S. Moss, Marketing Director; John Vettoso, Controller. Advertising offices also at 1025 East Maple Street, Birmingham, Mich. 48011; 221 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60601; 2902 Carlisle Street, Dallas, Texas 75204 and 3932 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90010.

**Subscription Rates.** U.S. & Possessions, one year, \$6.00; two years, \$11.00; three years, \$16.00. Add \$1.00 per subscription year for all other countries.

**Manuscripts, Drawings and Photographs** should be accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes. They will be carefully considered, but the publisher cannot be responsible for loss or damage.

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# SPORT TALK

## LINEUP

GEORGE STEINBRENNER, the demanding one who owns the New York Yankees (page 14), goes through secretaries almost as swiftly as his team goes through baseballs. Some of his former secretaries swear by him, and some swear at him. He's had four or more in 1976, and one was named Lola. Presumably, she was not the same Lola who helped the devil swap a pennant for a soul in *Damn Yankees*. Or maybe she was . . . Before the 1976 All-Star Game, PRESIDENT FORD and his son Jack visited the American League locker room and chatted with the starting pitcher, MARK FIDRYCH (page 70). Most of the conversation was reported in the papers, but not one question Fidrych asked JACK FORD. The Big Bird wanted to know exactly how good CHRIS EVERT was—off the court . . . Speaking of politics and baseball, the Republican Congressional baseball team has been in a slump the past few years, mostly because WILMER "VINEGAR BEND" MIZELL, the former St. Louis Cardinal pitcher, lost his bid for a fourth term in 1974. But things are now looking up for the GOP: Mizell is trying to make a comeback in November, and BOBBY RICHARDSON, the former Yankee second baseman, is the Republican nominee for Congress in South Carolina's 5th District . . . Remember GEORGE THEODORE, the weirdest of all the weird New York Mets in the team's brief history? A charming man, though not much of a hitter, Theodore majored in psychology in college, minored in philosophy, read Tarot cards, quoted Edgar Cayce, memo-

rized e. e. cummings and admitted to at least one extrasensory experience. His baseball career is over now, but the Stork—why do all baseball flakes get ornithological nicknames?—is still flying. I mentioned his name on a late-night television show recently, and he responded, with a postcard showing Buffalo Bill on the front and this message on the back: "By precipitating my name via the trans-American TV medium of *The Tomorrow Show*, many trees have been watered.



**Ex-Yankee Bobby Richardson, far right, is running for Congress; ex-Met George Theodore is starting a trout farm.**

Representingly, I thank you. I am now a non-ballplayer (Zen wise), very much into flora and trout farming in Utah, which I eventually intend to market at Radio City. I'll send you a prospectus. Meanwhile, watch for my latest poem, 'Do Butterflies Have Feet.' " Now you know why YOGI BERRA had trouble managing the Mets . . . The emergence of DR. RENEE RICHARDS—the former Richard Raskind, before a sex-change operation—is testing the principles of some of the strongest advocates of equality for women in sports. A few of the editors of *womenSports*—our sister publication—think that Dr. Richards should not be allowed to compete against women unless she passes an Olympic-type chromosome test. The same editors had argued that the chromosome test in the Olympics was degrading. GENE SCOTT, the tennis pro and promoter, offers an interesting assessment of Raskind-Richards. Scott says that Richard Raskind could have beaten any of the top women players in the world, but that Renee Richards can not. Renee Richards weighs 30 pounds less than Richard Raskind did, and her game has been weakened by hormonal changes . . . Now that WILT CHAMBERLAIN's first





movie, *Go For It*, is being released nationally—he's the executive producer, not the star—Wilt is looking forward to producing more films. He's not desperate to become a movie star, but he admits that if the right role comes along, he wouldn't mind casting himself in one of his films. "There's a little ham in me," confesses Chamberlain, and most referees would agree. "Who, me?" was his best act. Wilt is also thinking about returning to basketball, as an owner, perhaps of a new NBA franchise in Toronto . . . When SUGAR RAY LEONARD, the Olympic boxing hero (page 90), returned home to Maryland, he discovered that Prince George County had filed a paternity suit against him. Leonard was stunned—not because of the charge (he readily acknowledged that he had a two-year-old out-of-wedlock son), but because of its timing: He had waved a Prince George County flag in the ring in Montreal, and the chief executive of the county had come to watch his final fight. The Washington Star's front-page headline read: "Sugar Ray Jolted By Surprise

Blow" . . . TEOFILO STEVENSON, the Cuban heavyweight, may be a dedicated socialist, but his teammate, ALBERT JUANTORENA, the double-gold medal runner, likes at least one aspect of capitalism: American women. When Juantorena wasn't running U.S. men into the ground, he was sitting in the Olympic Stadium with U.S. women, chatting in English and charming them with his looks: He looks like a Latin JAMES CAAN . . . When TIM ROSSOVICH, once one of the NFL's top linebackers, decided to try a comeback this year—he went to training camp with the Houston Oilers—he announced that he had changed his diet. Rossovich said that he no longer chews up drinking glasses. The new, mature Rossovich wants to chew up only ballcarriers . . . One of the reasons ED MARINARO never blossomed into a star in Minnesota—according to Marinaro—is that the quarterback, Fran Tarkenton, had too little faith in his running ability. When Marinaro ran for 95 yards in the New York Jets' exhibition against the New York Giants, the first thing he said to me in the locker room was, "You didn't think I could do it, did you? You've been listening to number ten too much."

—DICK SCHAAP

## TALK TO THE ANIMALS

Each year, on the eve of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Forest Hills hosts the Robert F. Kennedy Pro-Celebrity Tennis Tournament, a less serious event. Each year, the RFK tournament offers a souvenir program, jammed with advertisements, cartoons and even a few articles. Ethel Kennedy asked me to contribute an article to the 1976 edition of the program, and I was happy to comply with the following:

For the past few years, the National Broadcasting Company has been assigning me and a camera crew to cover each renewal of the Robert F. Kennedy Pro-Celebrity Tennis Tournament. Each time, the assignment has come as a surprise to me. Usually, I cover sports.

I quickly developed a pattern for covering the event: I would come out to Forest Hills, search for a balanced sampling of celebrities (one actor, one actress, one singer, one jock, one writer, one commissioner, one Kennedy, one Republican, one black comedian and one gay), ex-

**At Ethel Kennedy's tournament, Bill Cosby was a mongoose, Billie Jean King was a pro and Elton John was obscene.**





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And they do come up with some very interesting finds:

... the superb seafood restaurant away from Fisherman's Wharf that San Franciscans—but very few others—know about.

... the simple Parisian restaurant that serves the best *coquilles St. Jacques* in town.

... the ancient English inn outside of town, built in 1135, where the clientele relaxes in an ambiance of lazy charm.

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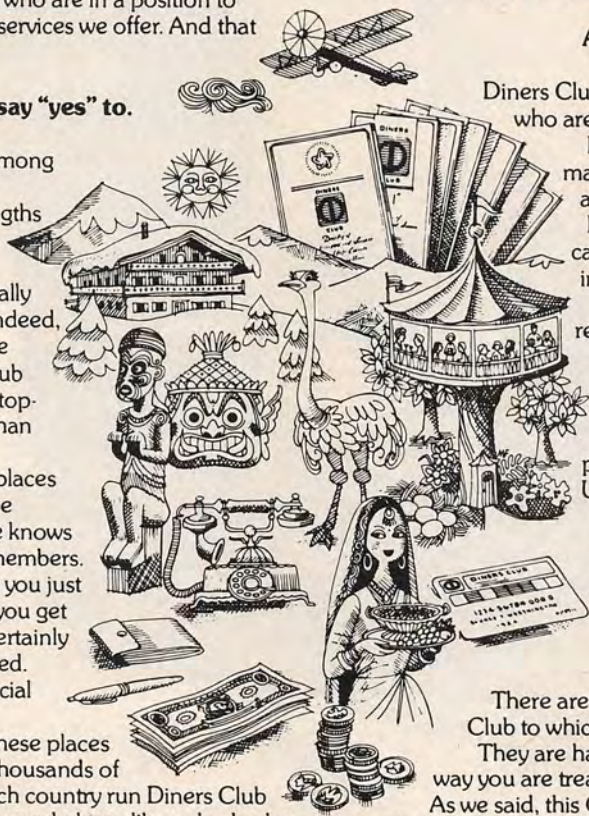
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plain to Don Meredith that I couldn't use him on-camera because the network was afraid he would apply it against his guarantee, kick away Geraldo Rivera who kept clutching for the microphone, tell Andy Williams that he couldn't sing his answer, that he would have to attempt to utter a complete sentence with a subject and a predicate, then ask each of the chosen celebrities such strictly tennis questions as: Has anyone ever clocked your serve? Do you have a wicked forehand? Do you have a backhand? Do you favor Simplified Scoring or do you think Congressional secretaries should know how to type?

Obviously, I was taking the whole thing too seriously. So last year I decided to cut out the technical stuff and ask each of the celebrities the same question: What animal do you remind you of—on the tennis court?

The answers, to my relief, were varied, revealing and sometimes even humorous.

"An ass," said Ham Richardson, who,

like most financial consultants, is famous for his wit.

"A tiger," confessed Art Buchwald, burning bright.

"A mongoose," said Bill Cosby, "because all of my opponents are rats, and mongooses kill rats."

"I thought mongeese killed cobras," I said, simultaneously attacking Cosby's grammar and his zoology.

"Ha!" parried Cosby. "That's all you know—you rat!"

"A cheetah," said Steve Smith, and Cosby, eavesdropping, said, "Damn right. That mothuh is a cheetah." Most taxi drivers agreed.

"An old Jew," said Alan King.

I explained to King that I'd appreciate it if he could give me a second answer because I was afraid that, on television, his first answer might be offensive to the Jewish people.

"A camel," said Alan King, dryly.

I told him I was afraid that his second answer might be offensive to the Arab people.

"A phoenix," said Ethel Kennedy, mything the point (or, as Barbara Walters

would say, "Missing the point").

"A giraffe," said Julius Erving.

"A bear," said Dave DeBusschere.

"An elephant," said Rosie Grier.

"A Rosie Grier," said Frank Gifford.

"Go ---- yourself," said Elton John, who was—at least as far as I could tell—the least cooperative of the celebrities.

I tried to explain to John that, on television, his answer might be offensive to the American people.

"---- off," he said, diminishing even further his chances of appearing on NBC News that night.

"You serve like a girl," I countered, softly, so that none of his 427 armed guards would hear me. With my luck, Billie Jean heard me, and took offense.

Despite Elton John, I intend to return to the zoo in 1976, to visit once more with all the lions and gazelles who turn out each year to honor the memory of Robert F. Kennedy. He was a noble animal; he was a thoroughbred. Like Bold Ruler, he had impressive breeding, he hated to lose and he certainly was an amazing sire.

—D.S.

## LETTERS TO SPORT

### LONG LIVE THE KINGS

It is appalling that Jon Trontz would have so little regard for accuracy in his description of the Marcel Dionne press conference at The Forum (*Hockey's Super-Scoring Misfit Finally Fits*, August).

I have listened to an audio tape of the entire press conference . . . and it bears no resemblance to the bilge that Mr. Trontz chose to dredge up from his imagination. I can only conclude that Mr. Trontz invented the quotes and situation to fit his preconceived story line. . . .

In fact, the press conference opened with all the principals seated at the front of the room, and not by my "strutting out from behind a curtain." The seating arrangement had several people between Marcel and me, which would have made it impossible for me "to put an arm around

the short, stocky fellow."

But, Mr. Trontz' grossest inaccuracy came when he invented my saying, "Marcel Dionne can be our Moses." I would never make such a statement because . . . it could not be further from the truth.

The Los Angeles Kings are not waiting to be led out of the wilderness nor are they in the wilderness at all. In 1974-75 the Kings finished only eight points behind first-place Montreal at the close of the regular season and last season they took Boston to seven games in the quarter-finals of the Stanley Cup. In short, the team has improved in each of its nine seasons in the NHL, and will continue to do so. . . .

**Jack Kent Cooke**  
Chairman of the Board  
Los Angeles Kings  
Los Angeles, Calif.

### LONG LIVE THE KINGMAN

The irritating tone of Mr. McRae's article (*Dave Kingman Scares Everyone . . . Even Himself*, August) left little doubt in my mind as to why Kingman made every effort to avoid seeing the writer. Referring to a man who (in little over half a season) had hit 32 home runs and driven in 72 runs as a

"sideshow freak" shows not only insensitivity, but downright stupidity.

**Lon Ward Abrams**  
Kew Gardens, N.Y.

Dave Kingman is moody, self-centered and inconsiderate. My compliments to Earl McRae for tolerating this childishness long enough to get his material.

**John K. Paulus**  
Tucson, Ariz.

### LONG LIVE THE PRINTERS

In your August "SPORT Quiz," question 14 read, "Which of these former National League pitchers never pitched a no-hitter?" The answer given is Bill Singer. However, on July 20, 1970, Bill Singer pitched a no-hitter against the Phillies.

**Bob Dixon**  
Florence, N.J.

*Ed. The question, as published, was accidentally incomplete. It should have read, "Which of these former National League pitchers never pitched a no-hitter against the Cincinnati Reds?"*

**Letters To SPORT**  
641 Lexington Ave  
New York, N.Y. 10022



# Yankees

## 76 A TEAM THE STADIUM CAN BE PROUD OF



BY GENE SHALIT

*"I want to build a university the football team can be proud of."*  
—Attributed to a president of the University of Oklahoma

**Y**ankee owner George Steinbrenner set out to collect a team fit for the new Yankee Stadium. The place has cost some \$150 million, or one buck for every crook in government.

For openers (April 15), there was Martin in pinstripes again, managing. He isn't Pepper, but he's a seasoned manager.

Steinbrenner is a man of conviction. Eager to acquit himself well, he set out to win the flag, and sought stars for his stripes. He spent plenty, and even got a refund from Charles O. Finley, who rang up the most publicized "No Sale" in history.

Over the past few seasons, here's

what Georgie bought:

**First Base, CHAMBLISS.** With a name that looks like French wine, Chambliss is having a vintage year. He's from the Indians. His father is a chaplain, and Chris preys on pitchers.

**Second base, RANDOLPH.** Willie, raised in Brooklyn, was smart enough to get out of Brooklyn. He got as far as Pittsburgh when he was moved to the Bronx. Residence-wise, Willie is 0-for-3.

**Third base, NETTLES.** The most misspelled player in the majors. Graig (7 to 5 that comes out Craig) came from Cleveland, giving the player he replaced an Erie feeling.

**Shortstop, STANLEY MASON.** Jim Mason (from the Texas Rangers) and Fred Stanley (San Diego Padres) have not been permitted to play short simultaneously, but only because Finley has kept his

mouth closed. If Charlie ever publicly insisted that the Yankees have only one shortstop on the field, Bowie Kuhn would immediately order the Yankees to play a five-man infield. (Stanley is a graduate of one Rio Hondo Junior College, leading scholars to assume that he majored in fixing Spanish motorcycles.)

**Catcher, MUNSON.** Few fans know the inside story of Thurman's discovery. When he was one year old, he was squatting on his potty and wiggling his fingers between his legs when the famous French scout Pierre Voyer peered through the window and cried out, "Mon Dieu! A natural!" Even now, when recalling that experience, Voyer chokes, which can never be said of Munson.

**Outfielders: ROY WHITE,** one of only two starters developed by the Yanks (the other is Munson), Steinbrenner got him when he bought the franchise. White has appeared in a movie called *The Premonition*, which I did not see (or foresee).

**LOU PINIELLA** came from Kansas City. He lives in Tampa where many people think a Piniella has something to do with picking the winners of the first nine races.

**OSCAR GAMBLE,** dealt by the Indians, does well when the chips are down.

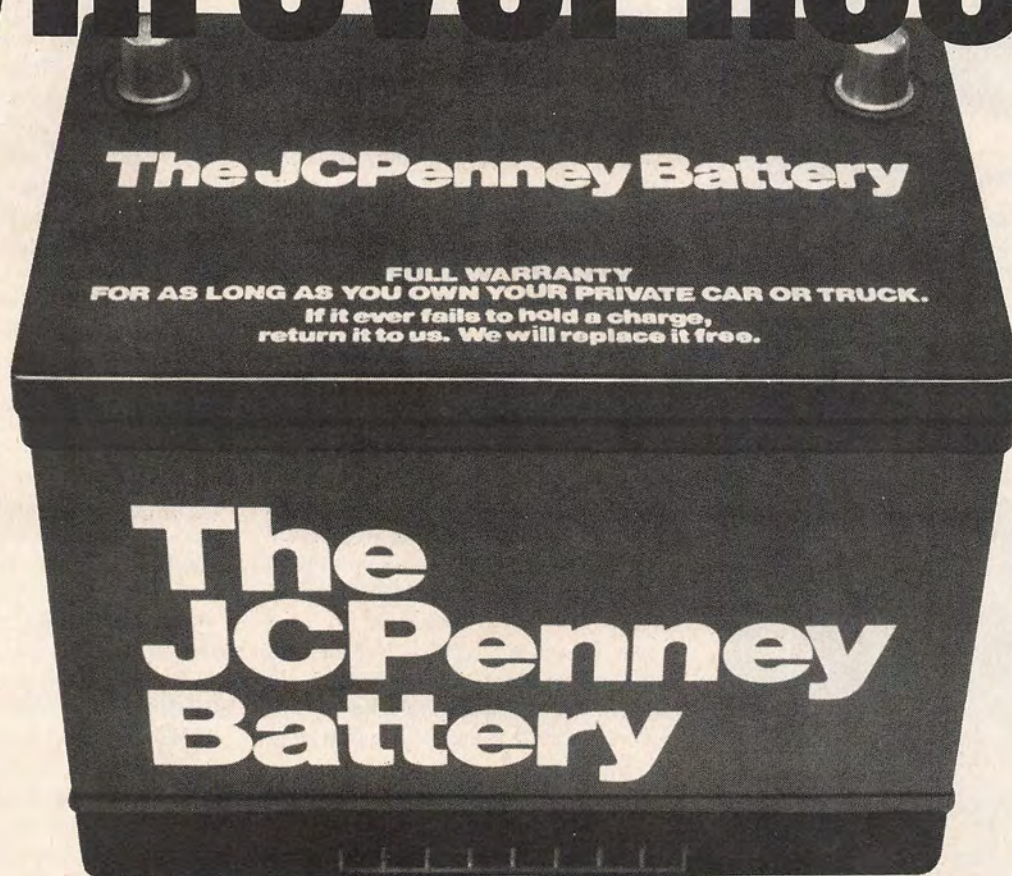
Roving all over center field is **MICKEY RIVERS.** Sometimes Rivers is deep, sometimes Rivers is shallow, and since joining the Yankees he's been making waves, but he will never wear the mantle of DiMaggio.

Steinbrenner hopes it will be a long time before his pitching staff is over the hill. His accountant has so far signed Catfish Hunter (from the A's), Ken Holtzman (A's and O's), Ed Figueroa (A'n'g'e'l's), Dock Ellis (Pirates), and Sparky Lyle (Red Sox).

So, true to tradition, New York is again a melting pot. Almost every other American League team has contributed at least one Yankee player, and manager Martin came on a carom shot from Detroit to Texas to New York. George figured there was only one way the A. L. could be beaten: With a Billy club. ■



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# DIDN'T YOU USED TO BE...

**THE BEST FULLBACK  
IN PRO FOOTBALL?**



**Jim Taylor**

Ten years ago, before the 1966 football season, Jim Taylor, the veteran fullback of the Green Bay Packers, sat down with his coach and general manager to discuss a new contract. Taylor told Vince Lombardi that he wanted a big raise—and that he deserved it: From 1960 through 1964, he had become the first man in National Football League history to rush for 1,000 yards a year in five consecutive seasons. Even with his glittering statistics, Taylor had spent those five seasons in the shadow of the Cleveland Browns' great Jim Brown, but with Brown's retirement in 1965, Taylor felt he was clearly the best fullback in the game and, at the age of 30, should be the best-paid.

Taylor went into the negotiations with a handicap. Like a later gifted fullback, John Riggins (see page 32), Taylor had to compete not only with opponents, but with a more charismatic teammate. No matter how brilliantly he played, Taylor was often obscured by the exploits, on field and off, of fellow Packer Paul Hornung, the Joe Namath of his day. Taylor was solid, Hornung showy; Taylor tended to be monosyllabic; Hornung rarely stopped talking. As different as their personalities were, Taylor and Hornung blended beautifully on the field, well enough to lead the Packers to NFL championships in 1961, 1962 and 1965.

By 1966, Taylor, a second-round draft choice out of Louisiana State University, had gone through three Green Bay contracts without ever being overpaid. "When I signed my first contract in nineteen fifty-eight," Taylor recalls, "I got ninety-five hundred dollars and a thousand dollar bonus. When the American Football League started in nineteen sixty, the market value of a player with the same ability as me went up about six or seven times. So, a second-round draft choice in nineteen sixty-one, three years after I signed, was probably signing for sixty or seventy thousand dollars before even proving he was pro material! Hell, the second contract I signed with the Packers was for six or eight thousand more than my first one and the third about ten thousand more than the second."

What made Taylor even madder, however, was that Lombardi had just spent \$1 million to sign two rookie running backs: Donnie Anderson from Texas Tech and Jim Grabowski from the University of Illinois. "That," says Taylor, "was very dif-

ficult to digest. Here were two untested rookies making much more money sitting on the bench than I was getting out on the field knocking my head on every play."

When Lombardi, a notoriously tough bargainer, balked at giving Taylor a huge raise in 1966, Taylor did what Riggins would do nine years later with the New York Jets: He decided to play out his option. In his final Green Bay season, Taylor carried the ball 204 times for 705 yards, contributing significantly to the Packers' first Super Bowl championship. But when the Packers assembled for training camp in 1967, Jim Taylor was gone. He had signed with the New Orleans Saints, who were starting their first season in the NFL. "I felt it was a move I'd be foolish not to make," says Taylor, a native of Louisiana. "It wasn't just the money. I knew I was worth more than Vince said I was. It came down to a matter of principle as much as dollars and cents." He signed a handsome contract in New Orleans, but money couldn't block for him. In 1967, Taylor rushed for only 390 yards. The Packers won their second Super Bowl that year, and Taylor retired from football.

Now he lives with his wife and two children in Metairie, La., a suburb of New Orleans, and works in the employee relations department of Halter Marine Services Inc., a shipping firm. He has no regrets about his decision to leave Green Bay and yet he has only the fondest memories of Lombardi.

"Vince Lombardi made me the player I was," says Taylor. "The Green Bay philosophy hinged on the ground attack. I knew that if I got the ball twenty times a game, I'd pick up a hundred or so yards. That was Lombardi's style and I'm glad I played on a team that exploited my ability." Lombardi's widow, Marie, made the introductory speech when Taylor was inducted this year into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

And what does Taylor think of the game of football as it is played today?

"I haven't followed it as closely as I did the first few years after I retired," he says, "but it's much more a game of individuals now. You don't have that team feeling that the Packers always had; all you ever see now are these guys dancing around in the end zone. What they don't realize is the one thing I always did: It takes ten other guys to get you in there."

**—TOM MURRAY**





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# ? THE SPORT QUIZ!

**GRADE YOURSELF**  
**14-16 EXCELLENT**  
**11-13 VERY GOOD**  
**8-10 FAIR**



**Sonny Jurgensen**

1. Which quarterback led the National Football League in passing the most seasons (six)?
  - a. Sammy Baugh
  - b. Len Dawson
  - c. Norm Van Brocklin
2. Who holds the record for passes attempted in one pro game?
  - a. George Blanda
  - b. Joe Namath
  - c. Davey O'Brien
3. Who holds the pro record for yards gained passing in a career?
  - a. John Hadl
  - b. Fran Tarkenton
  - c. Johnny Unitas
4. Who holds the National Collegiate Athletic Association record for total yards gained—rushing and passing—in a career?
  - a. Virgil Carter
  - b. Bill Anderson
  - c. Jim Plunkett



**Fran Tarkenton**

5. Who holds the NCAA record for total yards gained in one game by a quarterback?
  - a. Virgil Carter
  - b. Bill Anderson
  - c. Jim Plunkett
6. Which quarterback holds the NFL record for the highest completion percentage in a career?
  - a. Len Dawson
  - b. Sonny Jurgensen
  - c. Bart Starr
7. Which quarterback holds the NFL record for touchdown passes in a career?
  - a. Sonny Jurgensen
  - b. Fran Tarkenton
  - c. Johnny Unitas
8. Which quarterback holds the NFL record for most interceptions thrown in a career?
  - a. George Blanda
  - b. John Hadl
  - c. Joe Namath
9. What quarterback holds the NCAA record for most interceptions in a career?
  - a. John Reaves
  - b. John Eckman
  - c. Zeke Bratkowski
10. Who gained the most yards rushing among quarterbacks in the NFC last season?
  - a. Archie Manning
  - b. Roger Staubach
  - c. Fran Tarkenton
11. Match each of the following NFL quarterbacks with the college that he attended.

Roman Gabriel	Mississippi State
Joe Reed	Michigan State
Earl Morrall	North Carolina State

12. Who was the first quarterback to be selected as the NFL's No. 1 choice in the college draft?
  - a. Frank Dancewicz
  - b. Harry Gilmer
  - c. Sammy Baugh
13. Which of the following National Football League players won the Heisman Trophy for his skills as a college quarterback?
  - a. Tom Harmon
  - b. Paul Hornung
  - c. Joe Namath
14. Who was the only quarterback ever to win the Sullivan Award, which is presented to the finest amateur athlete in the country?



**Johnny Unitas**

- a. Les Horvath
- b. Arnold Tucker
- c. John Huarte
15. Which of the following failed to complete 50 percent of his passes in 1975?
  - a. John Hadl
  - b. Joe Namath
  - c. Mike Livingston
16. Which of these quarterbacks never passed for at least 500 yards in one game?
  - a. Joe Namath
  - b. Y.A. Tittle
  - c. Norm Van Brocklin

**FOR ANSWERS TURN TO PAGE 106**



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**Turkish and  
Domestic Blend**







# JOHNNY WHO? Bert Jones Takes Over In Baltimore

BY LARRY L. KING

Look at him. He don't even sweat.

It is a gasping-hot July day in Maryland, one of those when the native crabs might boil even before you pop 'em in the pot, and there are all those burly Baltimore Colt linemen, grunting and moaning as they atone for their winter sins in trying to firm up what's overhanging their belts. They are sweating salty rivers of agony and turning brick red, and some wear looks on their faces indicating a combination of unrequited love and news that their Mamas have just died.

Right smack in the middle of the poor devils, cool and lean and actually grinning, stands The Kid. The Kid Who Has Everything.

Bert Jones. Six-foot-three, 212 pounds. He is 25 years old, which alone is a priceless gift, but he has even more than youth and healthy All-American good looks. He has

money and fame and his own airplane, and it is the consensus of experts that he will be the next Superstar Quarterback. Some—including his coach, Ted Marchibroda, himself a fair quarterback in the 1950s with the Steelers and the Cardinals—think that The Kid may have the equipment to become one of the legendary greats: A Johnny Unitas, a Bobby Layne, a Bart Starr. One of those perennial winners who always seems to go in for the vital six, who beats you with his arm and his brain and his poise.

The Kid, who perhaps has more potential than any youngster since Frank Sinatra, also has a beautiful girl friend back home in Louisiana and a snazzy virgin-white Thunderbird with port-hole windows and a sun roof, and for all I know he has a cow that gives not milk but fine whiskey. Throwing the football for

the Baltimore Colts in only his fourth professional season, young Mr. Jones will make something like \$50 every time this tired old typewriter earns a dime.

And he don't even sweat.

The rules of practice, of course, are rigged so that quarterbacks are not supposed to sweat except as to oil their arms. Coaches permit their sweat-hogs—the poor linemen—to bash each other at the risk of arms and legs, but they have the same attitude toward their quarterbacks as they have toward their baby daughters: They are not to be touched.

That is why, when the Colts stagger toward the locker room after suffering the second of their two-a-day training camp workouts, Bert Jones is loping along singing snatches of a Mickey Newbury country-western song and failing to sweat.

Later, after he's gotten on the out-



# Jones

CONTINUED

side of a training table steak, wearing pressed blue jeans and his lower lip bulging with a he-man pinch of Copenhagen snuff, Bert Jones settles back to discuss the art of quarterbacking. It is a position he has played since fifth grade, which means he is about to begin his 16th year of it.

my first love, but I've got to credit baseball for developing the arm."

The Kid is proud of his arm and credits it for his rarely being intercepted: Only eight of his 344 passes fell into errant hands in 1975. "I know what I want to do," he says, "and the strong arm permits me to deliver when some people can't."

Young Jones is so confident he skates on the edge of cockiness. Asked what happened in the playoffs last year, when the 10-4 Colts lost the early momentum and fell to the champion Pittsburgh Steelers, 28-10, he says, "Frankly, I think it was because I got hurt. I took a lick

"A bit of tension" remains between Jones and Domres, though The Kid is quick to proclaim that "it's getting better, and we do a lot of things together." The tension is entirely normal, given the fact that quarterbacks, like opera stars, are prima donnas, and given the Domres-Jones history.

It was Marty Domres, after all, who replaced the legendary Johnny Unitas and, while learning his professional trade, received boos for his pains: An added handicap for a youngster not long out of Columbia University, which has not been known for its football prowess since the days of leather helmets. And no sooner did Domres seem to come into his own, after suffering all that controversy, when along came Jones—the talented Super Kid who soon would relegate Domres to a back-up role. Young Bert Jones takes care not to badmouth his rival, but he is non-committal when a visitor remarks that Domres appears to handle himself with more grace and elan than formerly.

Jones frequently calls back his impulsive utterances, smoothing them over and amending them, as if fearing he might sound too much the conceited brat. Actually, he comes off well and natural—a youngster full of the exuberances of youth and success—but it's as if he feels an obligation to present an aw-shucks Li'l Abner image and has trouble doing it.

"Johnny Unitas is a good friend of mine." Pause. "No, I guess you'd better say I consider myself a friend of *his* and it's a real honor . . ." Or: "No, it doesn't spook me to know they're comparing me with the great quarterbacks. I set out to be great." Pause: "Of course, it's just all talk so far, I've got to deliver . . ." He makes a joshing reference to the supposed lack of mental agility of Terry Bradshaw, his Pittsburgh Steeler counterpart, and then swiftly says: "I'm just joking like everybody does about Terry and don't mean to say anything bad about him. He was smart enough to win the Super Bowl. We're ol' Loui-



A quarter of a century ago, Dub Jones scored six touchdowns in one game. His son Bert was not quite three months old.

"Yeah," he says, "I guess I was always what you'd call 'a star.' Actually, in the beginning, I was a Little League baseball pitcher with a strong arm and I think I learned to throw the football from throwing the baseball. Football was always

on the throwing arm and it knotted and swelled and I couldn't deliver the ball. I was out of the game for almost two quarters. It might have been a different story." Then, as if realizing this analysis might not heap honors on his understudy, Marty Domres, he quickly adds, "Not that Marty didn't do a fine job . . ."



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## Jones

CONTINUED

siana pals and go hunting and fishing together." Other references—to the "redneck rock" music scene in Texas with its loose doping and sexing, to his love of speed in motorized vehicles—cause one to think that maybe inside that careful All-American Boy image is imprisoned a half-funky swinger hoping to break out.

It is night, now, and fresh from one of the interminable post-meal team meetings indigenous to summer football camp, Bert Jones is perched on a bar stool at a hole-in-the-wall hideaway called The Pine Ridge. He is wearing neat slacks, a short-sleeved shirt, and a hair-do that makes him look a shade like Prince Valiant. The patrons, surprisingly, do not appear to know who he is—except for a cocktail waitress, who has an air of conspiracy as if keeping Bert's secret. It is remarked that soon his face may become so well-known, blinking from magazine covers and television screens, that such public privacy will become impossible. "I dread that," The Kid says. "I don't like cities. I'll never live up here the year-'round. When the season's over, I'm off for the duck blinds or the woods, and after my career's over I may wind up a farmer." Drinks are ordered. Though Jones claims his teammates call him "Two-Beer Bert," implying a lack of personal familiarity with alcohol, he will have no trouble knocking back a half-dozen beers in the hour before bed check.

"Let's talk about the fear factor," his inquisitor says. "Is it there when you hear those murderous linemen thundering toward you?"

"No," he says, as if the notion is foolish. "Throwing the football requires total concentration. You can't do the job if you're back there



flinching. I rarely see the defensive linemen. Oh, you can *sense* pressure sometimes. But you never think about it if your mind is on the pass. And a lot of times, you wind up on your back without knowing how you got there or without feeling a thing."

Jones, who once unknowingly played four games with broken ribs (discovered when he was finally X-rayed), takes a sip of beer and says, "Besides, I've always liked hitting people. If I'm trapped I can run, you know. I love to run the ball."

Last year Bert Jones was the best rushing-quarterback in the NFL, gaining 321 yards in 47 carries, which was five more yards than Roger Staubach gained on eight more carries. Like Minnesota's scrambling Fran Tarkenton—who's never been seriously injured though he's played in the NFL since shortly after water was invented—Jones takes short, choppy steps when he runs. Some theorize that this may prevent injury, since when hit he isn't likely to be extended in an ungainly manner and his ligaments are less likely to be stretched to the tearing point.

But Jones knows that the gold is in his arm, and not in his feet. The Colts have people like Don McCauley and Lydell Mitchell and Roosevelt Leaks to haul the mail overland. They don't have anyone else, however, who in 1975 completed 203 passes—or 59 percent—for 2,483 yards and 18 touchdowns. Nor do they have anyone who calls such a heady game that coaches never interfere and give him the kind of praise which goes wholly against tradition: "It's hard to come up with anything he does wrong."

Even when the Colts were posting horrid 4-10 and 2-12 records in Jones' first two seasons and when he originally sat on the bench behind Domres, The Kid claims never to have doubted himself. Not even when the fans were booing and demanding the return of the traded Johnny Unitas? "No, that wasn't personal. That was a reaction

against losing their old heroes, the guys who'd given them so many great moments and thrills. I don't think Marty or myself ever took it personally. We knew we were young and building and even when I was getting sacked in those years it didn't occur to me that there might not be better things down the line."

Better things began to happen none too soon. The 1975 Colts got off to a 1-4 start; the boo birds by then could scathingly remark on the "rebuilding" program of general manager Joe Thomas without drawing much return fire: It had accounted, to that point, for exactly 12 wins and 35 losses. In Buffalo the following week, the Colts got down 0-21, and even a brave guy like Joe Thomas might have been thinking of returning to Baltimore by way of Rangoon. Maybe they smoked something special at the half, or maybe Joe Thomas threatened mass executions, but for whatever reason the young Colts exploded to win that game, 42-35, and went on a nine-game rampage that included twin victories over Miami (33-17 and 10-7) and cinched the American Conference Eastern Division championship. Now Baltimore fans throw roses in Joe Thomas' path. His squad is the youngest and most rollicking in the NFL, and in Bert Jones, says the man who acquired the draft rights to him for a fourth-round draft choice and a journeyman defensive lineman named Billy Newsome, "We have a real franchise builder." This translates that Mr. Thomas does not expect his Colts to lose many more games any time soon.

On his bar stool, Bert Jones is working the kinks out of his *id* by applications of an imported beer; he claims it cannot hold a candle to Lone Star, the favorite beverage of his redneck rock heroes such as Willie Nelson and Jerry Jeff Walker. The inferior import, however, soon causes young Mr. Jones to take what lawyers would call judicial notice of a comely young woman who has accompanied the writer. Soon Bert is talking and smiling at the young woman to the exclu-

sion of the writer and maybe the writer's wishes. The young woman is a sports nut and can recite scores and statistics and Superstars from long before she was born, and she uses this talent to impress The Kid. Probably she would have impressed The Kid, however, had she played a tune on the comb. She is the kind of lady who gets a lot of looks, and now that Bert Jones was looking, she teased him a bit:

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-four going on twenty-five," he said.

"I'm twenty-nine going on thirty. *Much* too old for you."

Young Mr. Jones disputes this not entirely in the spirit of gallantry, and says had he known he would be favored with her company he would not have been dipping snuff on her arrival.

The writer—not wanting Mr. Jones to perhaps get around to sympathetically asking the lady whether she has a place to pass the night—cleverly invokes Daddy. Daddy—Bert's daddy—is a super-straight good guy named Dub Jones, now a lumberyard and construction company mogul in Ruston, La.; in 1951, as a running back for the Cleveland Browns, Dub Jones got in the record book by scoring six touchdowns. Against the Chicago Bears. In one game.

It is well-known that young Bert near to worships old Dub. And so on the mention of Daddy, The Kid straightens up and assumes a sincere expression; you almost expect him to glance over his shoulder to see whether the old man has caught him drinking beer. Last year, celebrating a key Colt victory, The Kid got his picture taken while surrounded by a bevy of girls, waving a wine bottle, and generally giving the impression of enjoying himself. He was heartsick when the photo made the national wire services, suspecting—rightly, as it turned out—that the Old Man would not cotton to it.

"He's a great man," The Kid earlier had said of his father. "I always wanted to be like him. That's one reason I never thought of *not* playing pro ball. I imagine if he'd been



# Jones

CONTINUED

an architect, then I would have become one, too." Dub Jones did not, his son says, put pressure on him to be a chip off the old football block.

"He was there to advise me when I asked, or to play catch if I wanted to, but he never forced it. I guess he groomed me, all right, but it was by osmosis. When he coached with the Browns and I was a teenager, I spent four summers with him in training camp and picked up pointers."

"I hear he was a fine man," the writer says, sipping his drink, "who never picked up girls in bars or ran around on your Mama."

Soon there is the recollection of what Dandy Don Meredith, the former Dallas Cowboy quarterback, said about the pressures of stardom shortly before he retired: "Since I was eight years old they've been there. It's always been 'Come on, Don, hit the winning home run. Throw for the last-minute touchdown, Don.' That gets on your nerves after awhile."

The Kid shakes his head and says, "I never felt that way. Pressures are part of the game. They can even be a gift by allowing you to respond. They can help make you better and come closer to excellence."

The Kid turns to another aspect of the game. "I could always throw and run and get the job done, but I never had true leadership until coach Marchibroda. It's like a calculus problem: You can't work it until you've had a calculus teacher. Up until last year, I just sort of picked things out of a hat and threw. But Marchibroda could show you and tell you *why* to do things, and you could pick it up and take it on home to Mama.

"He brought direction to this team. We didn't just suddenly grow up and start winning. A lot of young teams never reach their potential,

and I think it's because they don't get the proper leadership." He takes a sip of beer and unleashes a country boy aphorism: "It's easy to be a pumpkin, but you're not a jack-o-lantern until you're cut."

Why is Marchibroda such an exceptional coach?

The Kid thinks about it, shifting on the bar stool, and then talks above the strains of a local band.

"When I came to the pros I had a strong arm, good physical equipment. But I didn't have much of a football philosophy. Marchibroda changed that. You can communicate with him one-on-one, like you're talking to your offensive tackle. You don't have to talk to somebody up on a pedestal. You aren't afraid to ask questions or make suggestions or even to disagree. You can *learn*. He's just one hell of a fine teacher."

Marchibroda returns the compliment by calling Bert Jones a brilliant pupil. Old pros say The Kid has that intangible leadership quality so common to the great ones, that charisma or spark that will rally a team when it's down and get it to believing in miracles.

In the key game against the Miami Dolphins in Baltimore last year, Jones won his spurs. (It's remarkable, considering the whoopla about his being a potential Great, to realize The Kid has played in only 30-some pro games and has started only a few more than 20.) "It was a no-risk game," The Kid recalls. "That is, neither side could afford a big mistake. We didn't go to the bomb"—Jones' favorite play—"except for one I missed just before the half. Maybe we played it too cautious: We moved the ball but didn't get any points. Then the Dolphins blocked a kick, I think, and went ahead seven-to-zero. I was hot under the collar."

Jones then took his team on an 86-yard drive, nickel and diming the Dolphins to death, and consuming just under seven minutes while tying the game. "The remarkable thing," Marchibroda has said, "is that Bert went against his natural instincts. He stuck to the short stuff

called for in the game plan."

In overtime, hemmed in on their own four-yard line, the Colts began their drive. With third and long on the Colt 19-yard line, Jones told his receivers to run their pass patterns five yards deeper than usual—to insure the vital first down. Otherwise, the Colts would have to surrender the football within field-goal range. Jones delivered the ball to tight end Raymond Chester for the 15 yards needed.

Taking a sip of beer and remembering, he said, "We knew then there was *no way* we'd lose that game." He took them on down the field, mixing short passes and the running of Lydell Mitchell and Don McCauley, for the 31-yard field goal by Toni Linhart and a 10-7 win that gave Baltimore the division title.

The night after the mini beer-bash at The Pine Ridge—on a broiling Saturday afternoon in Hershey, Pa., before a huge crowd drawn from among tourists attending the Pennsylvania Dutch Days Festival—Bert Jones got his first preseason shot at outside competition in a controlled scrimmage against the Washington Redskins.

In the beginning, after warming up with easy-motion lazy floaters, Bert Jones hit his short stuff and several times missed the bomb by a hair. Soon enough, he began to drop "scoring" passes into the arms of the flamboyant Glenn Doughty (who, like *Semi-Tough's* Shake Tiller can usually catch anything in the air that don't sting) and Chester and McCauley and even an unknown rookie or two. Despite the grunts and rushes of the Redskin defenders, Jones hit his receivers long, short, and intermediate; you recall the 1974 game against the Jets, when Bert Jones joined Daddy Dub in the record book by completing 17 passes in succession.

Then it was Marty Domres' turn. The Kid trotted toward the sideline, grinning, maybe a little full of himself, and there was something in his strut of the limitless poetry of youth and dreams. *No sweat. No sweat. No sweat.* ■



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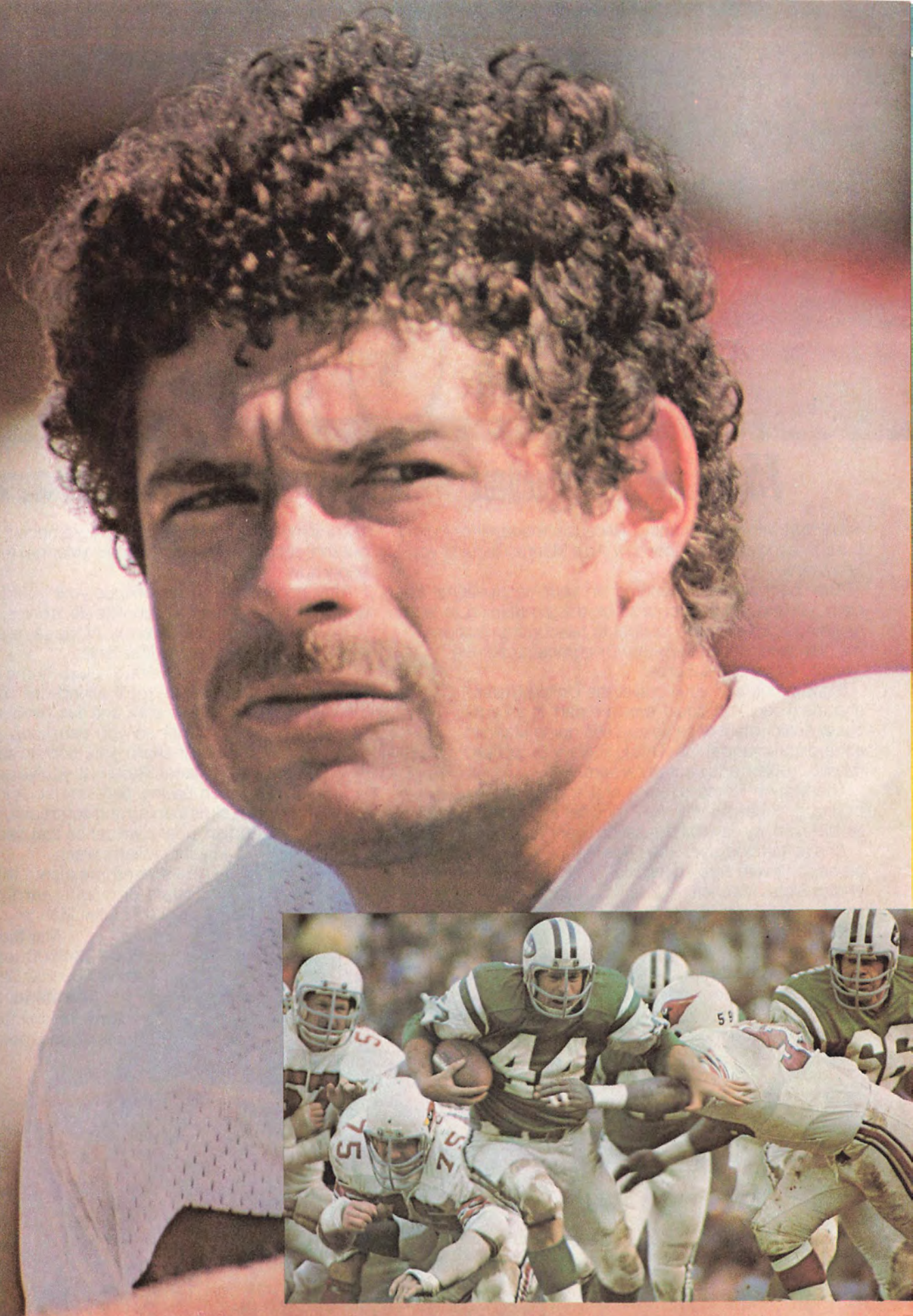
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# MR. RIGGINS GOES TO WASHINGTON

BY JOHN DEVANEY

**"I** am a man of many different faces," John Riggins said, sitting on a long green bench in the flashing July sunlight at the Washington Redskins' training camp in Carlisle, Pa. "Shakespeare said that life is a stage and we are all but actors. I got a sneaky feeling he was right. Do you remember Tom Terrific in Captain Kangaroo? He used to sing, 'I'm Tom Terrific and I can be anything I want to be.' That's kind of the way I feel. I don't know if that's good or bad, but it makes my life interesting. I can always put on the right face to give people the right impression. I put people on the defensive. They are not sure what I'll do next. But if you scrape off all that outside stuff, down deep inside I don't know who I am and I guess most people don't."

John Riggins, who would soon be 27, might not know who he really is, but this much is certain: He is one of football's best-paid running backs. A week earlier, after five years as a New York Jet, he had contracted to play for the Redskins. He had asked

\$1.5 million for five seasons—to be paid at the rate of \$100,000 a year for 15 years—and while he probably agreed to less, he was one of those dozens of football entrepreneurs, called free agents, who recently sold their skills for double and triple their former wages.

Before signing with the Redskins, Riggins had donned horn-rimmed glasses, a three-piece business suit and a lawyer's demeanor, then flown around the country talking to dozens of National Football League teams. Earlier he had offered to re-sign with the Jets for \$425,000 a year—Joe Namath's salary to the last dime—knowing full well that he wasn't going to get it. "It's just my way," he explained, "of saying 'goodbye.' " Then, to any reporter who would listen, he tossed firecrackers at Namath and the Jets:

"The Jets have their superstar, Joe Namath, and there isn't room for anybody else . . . Namath was a little emperor . . . I can remember Weeb [Ewbanks, the former coach and general manager] holding the airplane when Joe was a little late, that type of stuff, which doesn't create the atmosphere you like. A lot of the veterans didn't say anything, but then you might say Joe fed them

the Super Bowl . . . But when I was there, I never saw him work one of his miracles."

Of himself, Riggins said: "The Jets need me if they want a championship, and if they give me what I'm asking, they'll get every penny's worth . . . The ideal back can carry the football, block, run inside and out—and he doesn't make mistakes. On a scale of ten, I think I qualify around nine in all those categories. I don't think there's another back in the league who can say that."

But he did not spare himself a few firecrackers: "For a couple of years I played the game without a heart . . . I was wrong and I apologized to the team for it . . . But I don't think any football player is paid well enough to risk permanent injury. I've gotten my head together now and I think I'm much more ready to play than I was three years ago. Still, you have to make a decision on how much you're willing to risk, and I think I know where my line is."

Some of the Jets thought Riggins' line lay due west of Flakyville. In 1971, Riggins showed up at the Jet rookie camp with a bushy Afro haircut, and later was seen wearing overalls, a derby and carrying an

**In his final season with the New York Jets, John Riggins played out his option and ground out more than 1,000 yards.**



# WASHINGTON

CONTINUED

English umbrella. He lived in a Greenwich Village walkup that had, as its featured furniture, a barber's chair. Two years later he came to camp with a Mohawk haircut, shaving all but a strip of hair in the middle of his head, making it look like a Roman helmet. During the off-season he lived in an old farmhouse near Centralia, Kan., in which plumbing had never been introduced; each summer he roared the 2,000 miles from Kansas to New York on a motorcycle, sleeping in pastures along the way. In Manhattan he knew all the late-hour places and, whatever differences he had with Joe Namath—as he told me while we sat on this practice field—"we had many a drink and a lot of fun together."

I had just asked him how he could swap roles so smoothly—country boy, city swinger, vested-lawyer type—when he had quoted Shakespeare and Tom Terrific. And now, seated next to me in gray shorts and a blue T-shirt, he could have been your average Greek god. His brown hair was a ball of curls tendriling down the back of his neck. His blue eyes lit a round face as bland as a baby's stare. The face is asymmetrical: One side seems set lower than the other. But a slashing mustache balances it. Riggins, actor that he is, can project in photos a sophistication that a Madison Avenue fashion model would envy.

The voice is still country: Drawling, a lot of "all righty's" punctuating sentences. The body is burly: 230 pounds strung over his six-foot-two frame; he was ten to 15 pounds too heavy. But he allowed as to how he'd soon work that off. "I'm still a growing boy," he said.

We talked of how that boy had

come to Washington. His father, Gene, was a former Wichita University football player who was Centralia's (pop. 500) railway depot master. He taught his three sons to be athletes. (John's older brother played minor-league baseball; his younger brother followed John to Kansas as a running back.) By his senior year at Centralia High, John was the biggest (220 pounds) and the fastest (9.8 for the 100) kid in town. When John burst around end, 120-pound opponents scattered out of his way. He went to the University of Kansas, thinking he would not make the team because he had never played against people his size ("I'd been brainwashed"). But he averaged five yards a carry for K-U as he broke all of Gale Sayers' school rushing records. In 1971 the Jets drafted him No. 1. But he came to New York with lingering self-doubts. When Ewbank offered him \$25,000 a year for two years, he signed happily. "Weeb said he didn't want to pay for a pig in a poke," Riggins told me, "and I could understand that. A lot of number one draft choices never do a damn thing in the NFL."

"I was as naive as they come. In college I had never realized I had K-U over a barrel because of my talents. I was always downgrading myself. But I am not a fool. It didn't take me long to realize I could play."

As a rookie in 1971 Riggins led the team in rushing with 769 yards, displacing Matt Snell, who had battered knees, as the team's No. 1 ball carrier. In 1972 Riggins again topped the team, rushing for 944 yards, even though he missed the last two games because of a bad knee that needed surgery.

"When we sat down in nineteen seventy-three to talk a new contract," Riggins said, squinting at the sun-blasted field, "the first thing Weeb said to me was, 'Well, you didn't get your thousand yards.' Right then I realized the man had lied to me. He kind of tore my football soul apart. I realized then that this game is a business. He tried to make points against me, but I knew I had the Jets over a barrel as long as I was healthy. And I knew from what happened to Matt Snell that once you didn't have it anymore, there are no tears shed for you. You are a dead horse who's chewed up for dog food. New faces come in and the new man gets the publicity. It's life itself—the survival of the fittest."

Riggins demanded \$150,000 for the 1973 season. He showed up at the camp with the Mohawk haircut, then walked out, a straw hat shading his all but hairless head, when Ewbank said no to his demands. Back in Centralia he talked about quitting. But finally he signed, angrily, for \$50,000 the first year and \$75,000 the second year.

"I had always wanted to play football," he said, recalling his galling surrender to Ewbank. "But damn it, I had never felt good about sticking my neck out and getting it busted in half. The year before I had played stiff-legged, having no business on a football field, but playing because Weeb had come to me with those sad eyes. I'd played because I didn't want to let my teammates down. I had been overcome by my own peer group. But now I told myself, 'All righty, John, you have to do what's best for you.'"

Out on the practice field, only a few dozen yards away, two giant Redskin linemen whammed into each other, huffing and puffing, pads cracking fiercely. Heat waves swayed from the ground around them and there were dots of blood on both men's jerseys. Riggins stared at them without interest, but he was talking of what it could mean to him and his future when a running back like himself disappears into the grasp of such men.





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# WASHINGTON

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"I realized that all I had that kept me in the game was my machine. Just like a race driver at Indianapolis, if he blows his engine he doesn't line up for the Indianapolis Five Hundred. By the same token, if I go out there and I blow my machine, I no longer have a job.

"It's a ticklish situation. The club always reserves the right to cut an injured player. Yet when an injured player holds back because he doesn't want to tear up his body, all of a sudden the ballplayer is a bad cat.

"I thought I'd help the team by staying out. If I was worried, I wasn't going to play well. Anyway, most of the time the Jets were out of the damn picture. I had a chance to be a truly fine running back and I couldn't see giving it up for one game when our asses were already whipped and we weren't going anywhere.

"Still, I may have gone a little too far. I sat out when I shouldn't have. If I'd been with an outfit that was shooting square, I would've taken chances. But with the Jets all they worried about was my having a thousand yards so the press would have something to write about. Or they worried how many people Joe Namath would draw into a stadium. I never felt they were that all-fired concerned about winning a championship in New York."

Playing "without a heart," as he later admitted, he rushed for 482 yards

in 1973, missing four games with a sore shoulder. The 4-10 Jets tied for last in the AFC East. In 1974 he again topped the team with 680 yards as the team improved to 7-7 and a tie for third.

Riggins then sat down with Al Ward, the retired Ewbank's successor, to discuss a new contract for 1975. "Right away," Riggins told me, anger clouding his drawl, "Ward had to say, 'Well, you didn't make a thousand yards.' You

**Once, Larry Brown was Washington's top ground-gainer, but now he sits on the bench, his knees and his ego bruised.**



could've put a match under me, it would've lit, I was that hot. I just didn't have to listen to that old cat-and-mouse game. I felt I was above that. I knew my talents and they should have known my talents or they didn't belong in this business. If they can't evaluate talent any better than that, they'll never win."

He stood up. We walked toward the dressing room, where he would change for afternoon drills. "Right then I had my saddle bags packed. I knew I was going at the end of the nineteen seventy-five season, as much as I hated to leave New York, which I loved. But I knew what I could do and last year I showed them what I could do."

In 1975 he rushed for 1,005 yards, becoming the first Jet ever to cross the 1,000-yard mark. He also led the team in pass catching with 30. On a 3-11 team again in the basement, he was voted the Jets' MVP by his teammates.

He told the Jets what he wanted to return in 1976—\$425,000 a year. "I had come to believe I was as important to the Jet offense as Joe Namath was. But I knew they wouldn't give me Joe's money."

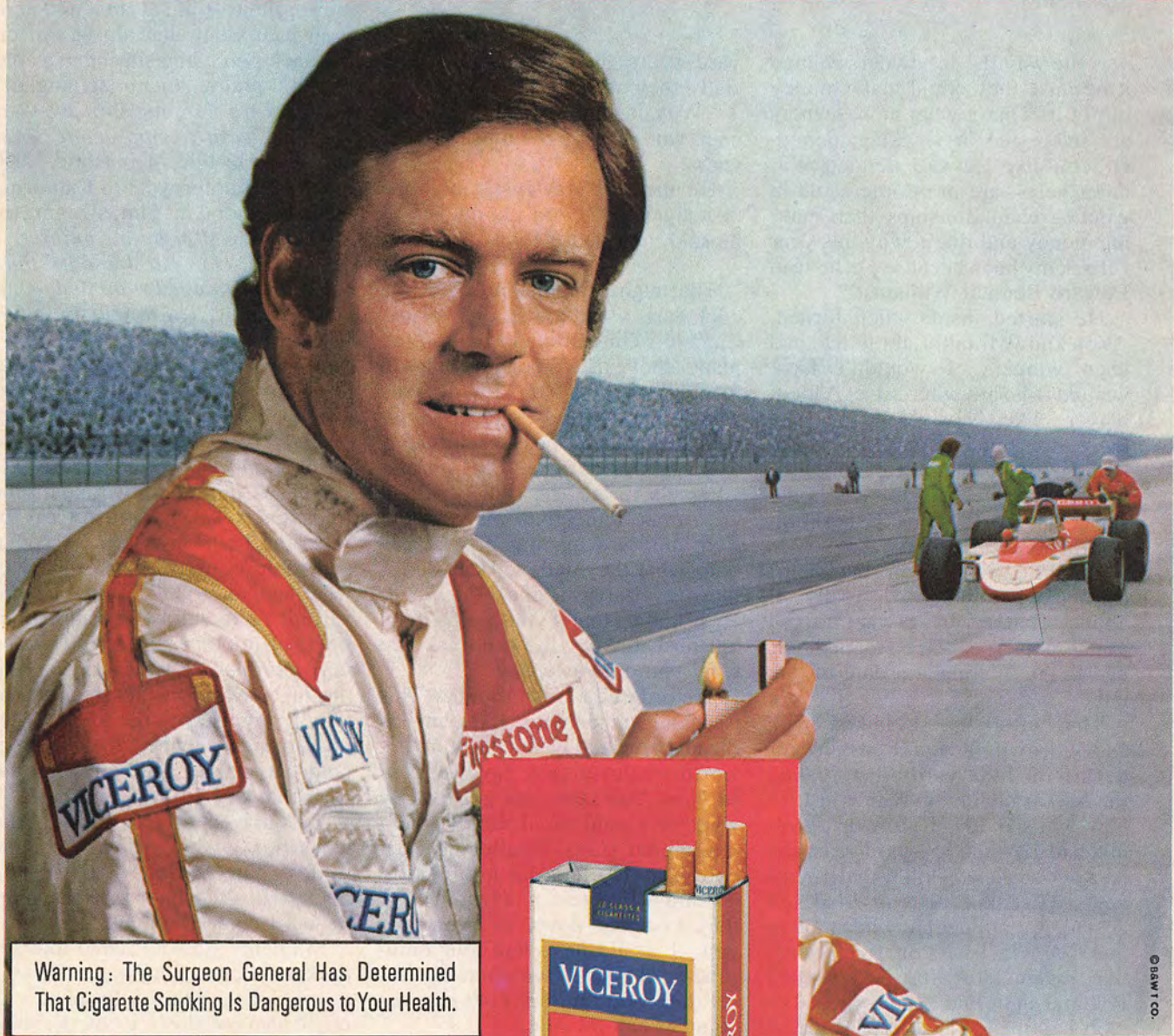
I asked about his relationship with Namath. "It wasn't a personal thing. Joe is a good fellow. I owe him a lot. I owe him for that thousand-yard season. In our last game he called my number twenty-seven times and it took twenty-seven times against the Dallas defense to get that thousand yards.

"Joe was a friend, not a good friend, but a friend. I mean, how would you feel hanging around with the Queen of England? There is always going to be a difference between the two of you."

We stopped outside the Redskins' shedlike dressing room. "It always seemed to me that it takes more than one man to win football games. But that



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# WASHINGTON

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was the way the Jet owners wanted it because they could make money out of it. That's what most owners are interested in—making money. Others—like Edward Bennett Williams here—are more interested in winning championships than making money and that's why this year I'll risk my neck because I believe in Edward Bennett Williams."

He started inside, then turned. "You know, frankly, if the Jets had been winners, I wouldn't have wanted to go anywhere else. A lot of players like New York because there are outside ways to make money. But I'm not a commercial maker, I didn't want to be a movie star. I just wanted to be the best full-back who ever played."

He shrugged. "Yeah, but then I learned what football is really all about. That's why I want to tell young players—" He stopped. He had to go. We made a date to talk later.

That afternoon I talked with Larry Brown, the first Redskin ever to rush for 1,000 yards (in 1970) and the NFL's champion rusher in 1972 with 1,216. In 1974 he tore up a knee and had 430- and 352-yard years the past two seasons. I knew that a number of Redskin veterans had not signed, grumbling that while money had been lavished on free agents like Riggins, running back Calvin Hill and tight end Jean Fugett, the club had pleaded poverty with the veterans. I asked Brown about his reaction to the coming of Riggins.

"I know John was outstanding in college," said Brown, resplendent in purple shorts and cap, his bearded coffee face somber. "But I can think of a few players who have spent six to eight years in the NFL and contributed more thousand-

yard years than John. Yet financially they are getting far less."

"Why is that so?" I asked the man who had two thousand-yard years.

He glanced sideways at me, then turned away. "I don't know why," he said, and then he was gone.

That night Riggins and I sat in a cool dark wonderland of a place, Carlisle's Gingerbread Man, potted plants above us, vodka and tonics in front of us on the bar. I told Riggins what Brown had said. "Obviously," I added, "he is resentful."

Riggins sipped at his drink. "Larry's right," he said. "Others have done more than me. But the Redskins are paying for potential—what they believe I can do tomorrow. Larry is like Matt Snell. He is finding that if you can't cut the mustard today, they don't care what you did yesterday."

We ordered a fresh round. "This is a game of machines. If a team has the machine and wants it to run, it's worth whatever they pay it to run. In New York the Jets got exactly what they paid for. I didn't give a crap about statistics after my second year. If I had put my mind to it—and if I'd been on a team where they knocked down everyone for you—I would have had four thousand-yard years. But when the Jets set their bottom line, I set my machine at half-throttle."

"Are you, then, a mercenary?"

"In football we are all mercenaries, whether a guy wants to admit it or not. This is like controlled warfare and no sensible body is going to do it unless the price is right. With the Jets, I was a mercenary without a heart but I think I've changed. I could have signed for

more money with other teams, but I wanted to be with a winner. I'll stick out my neck this year because I want to be a winner. I'm a mercenary with a heart."

Riggins talked of his life at his comfortable home in Lawrence, Kan., with his wife, Mary Louise, and their two-year-old son; of a more primitive life at their 160-acre farm near Centralia, sitting out on the back porch and staring at a cold moonlit prairie and imagining the rigors of his parents' life. *By God you can learn to appreciate what you got.* He told of blasting 2,000 miles on a motorcycle to California when the mood hit him, sleeping by the roadside. *I'm an adventurer. I ask myself: How can I find the time to do all the things I want to do—and yet do them well? I taught myself to be an auto mechanic. It's handy. Suppose your fan belt slides off and there you are stuck on the road wasting time? Now I take out my tool box, jump out of the car, put the fan belt on, and go on my way.*

Near 11 p.m., curfew time for the Redskins, we began our retreat toward the Redskin dorms. A vodka and tonic in fist, Riggins talked of what he liked to tell young players. "Don't be fooled by the adulation, by being put on a pedestal. This is a fairly ruthless business. You are dealing with businessmen, and they'll promise you the world to get you to sign a paper, but when it comes to making good on the promises, that's often something else."

We arrived at the dorm. "But what this all boils down to," he said, smiling, "is this: Will I dive on my face this season for the Redskins or will I come through?"

Moments later he faded into the darkness of a hallway. Driving down College Street I thought it all might also boil down to another nutshell: Will John Riggins, in his adventures through life, ever find out who he really is? I thought not. Like Tom Terrific, I suspect, he is always going to be anything he wants to be at the moment. For this season he might want to be football's best full-back, but I doubt that he'll break a neck trying. ■



# SCHOOLBOY FOOTBALL,

# South Carolina Style

BY FRANKLIN ASHLEY

**I** never played football. But I grew up in a place where high-school football approached religion, where long, sweat-soaked Indian summers finally gave way to a dying season—which, oddly enough, produced my country's most vital moments. The season was autumn, my country was the South.

I recently concluded that I was the only individual in my hometown—Columbia, S.C.—who had not been directly involved in high-school football. That conclusion was drawn from all the stories I had heard at all the parties I'd attended since I left high school in 1960:

My doctor caught 55 passes in a row; my lawyer was a pulling guard; my wife was a sequined majorette; my friend Charles Alexander—a skinny redhead who is half my size—was a quarterback; my barber was scouted by the Washington Redskins; even one of my best friends who is

slightly crippled from a childhood case of polio claims to have played in the game of games.

As one visionary Southern jour-

**Before air conditioning and Vietnam and "doing it," high-school coaches such as Reed Charpia (below) ruled the South.**



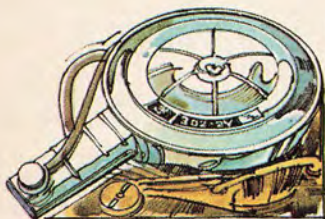
nalist told me a few years ago in a fit of Faulknerian rhetoric: "Football simply matters *more* here. South Carolina is a smattering of communities and villages where most urgencies coalesce around the permutations, undulations, agonies and ecstasies of the local high-school football team."

My wife Dottie wore spangles for South Carolina's meanest high-school football team, the Easley Green Wave. Still blinking big brown majorette eyes, Dottie told me what the memories meant: "In Easley in nineteen sixty-one, we had pep rallies every day the week of the big game. The band would march and we would perform in leotards and white boots, and each senior player would make a speech. These things went on for forty-five minutes Monday through Wednesday. Then Thursday it ran the whole morning. Finally, on Friday we had a rally and a picnic and everybody



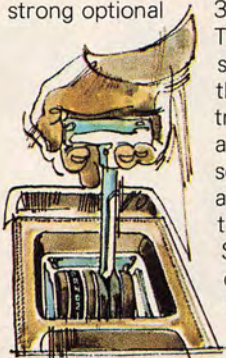
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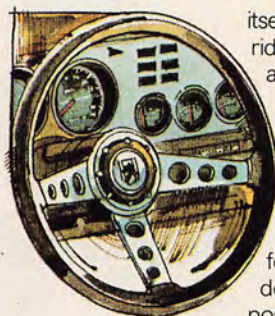
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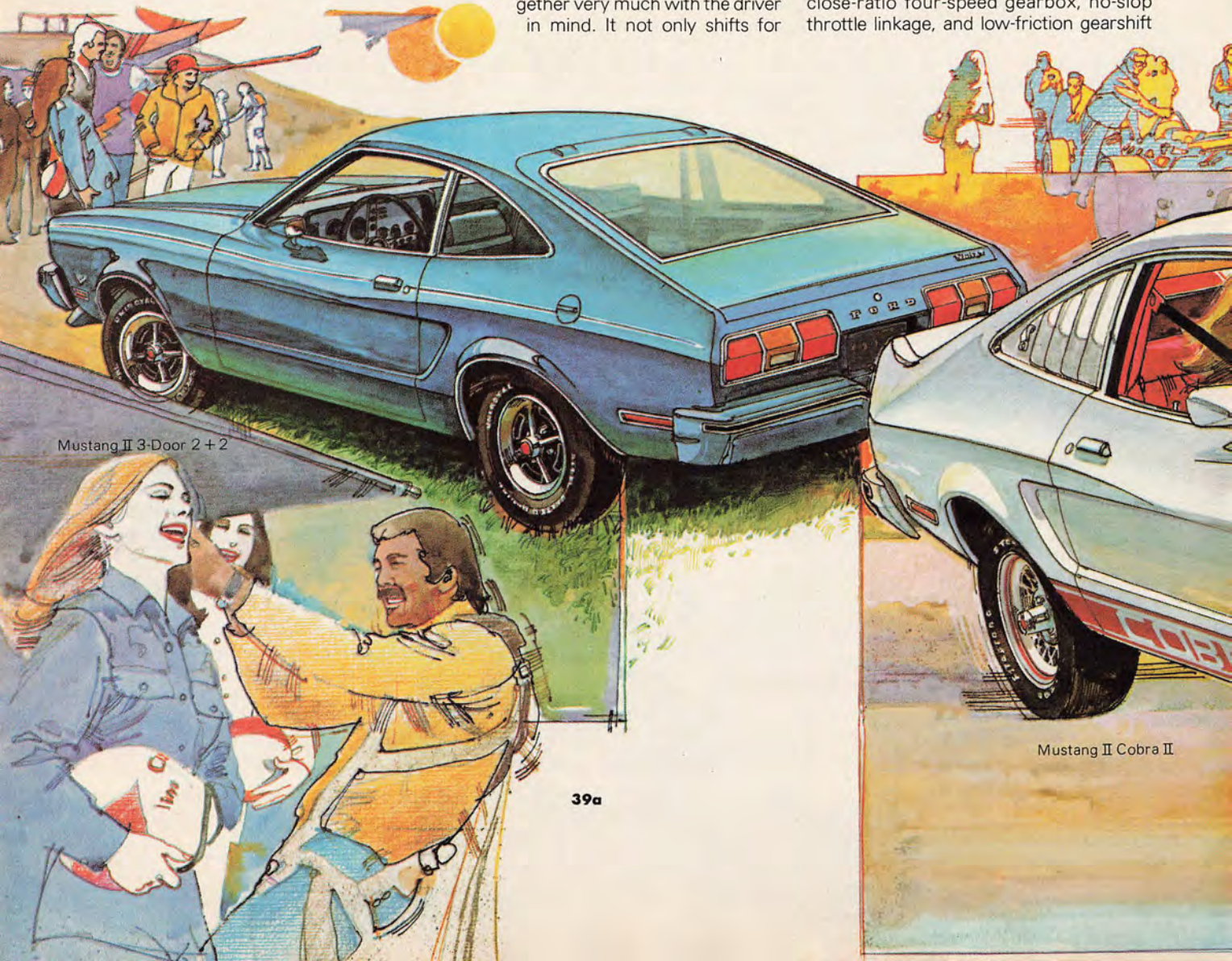
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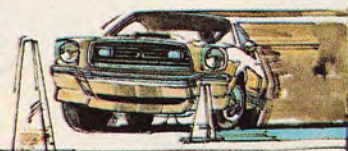
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Valve Lifters	Single	Single	Single
Valve Lifters	Hydraulic	Mechanical	Hydraulic
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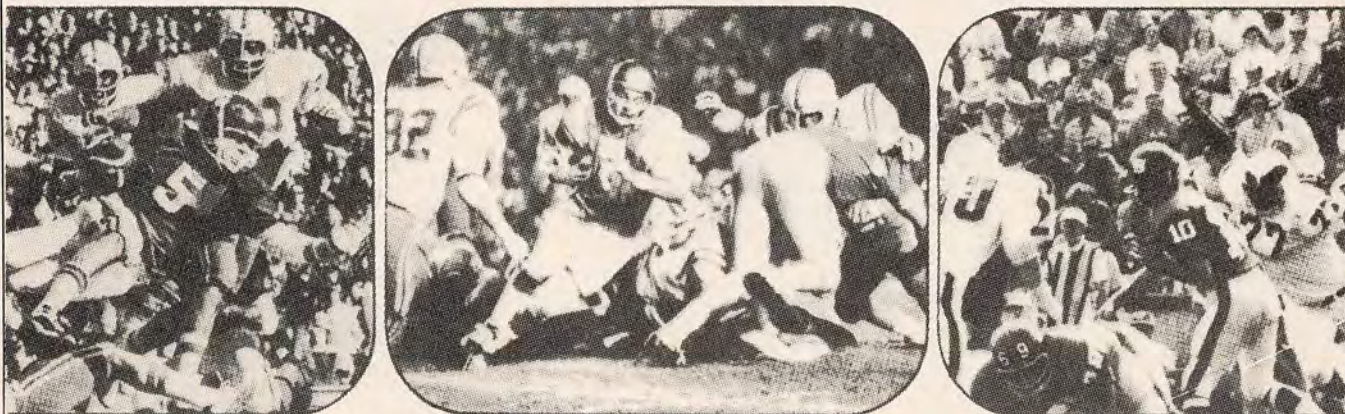
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
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■ **DWIGHT CHAPIN** (Los Angeles Times—The Times' regular-beat man assigned to the L.A. Rams.

■ **CAMERON SNYDER** (Baltimore Morning Sun)—Veteran pro football analyst who has never missed a Baltimore Colt game.

■ **LARRY FOX** (New York Daily News)—President of Pro Football Writers Association, Larry has covered N.Y. Jets since they were the Titans.

■ **MURRAY CHASS** (New York Times)—Football author and feature writer, Murray covered the Giants in 1975.

■ **DAVE NEWHOUSE** (Oakland Tribune)—An award-winning writer, Dave has covered the S.F. 49ers in the Tribune for the last 12 years.

■ **GERRY ESKENAZI** (New York Times)—A renowned hockey writer, Gerry covered the Jets for the Times last year.

■ **JOE O'DAY** (N.Y. Daily News)—Featured columnist for the News

[illegible]



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# Style

CONTINUED

kinda went home at twelve o'clock because we were too excited to do any school work. A few teachers objected, but they were zeroes."

It seems that everyone in South Carolina has some special mythic memory of high-school football. Just last week at a cocktail party I was asked where I played. I looked at the floor and mumbled because it was so damn hard to tell the truth—that I had only been a fan. So it was a combination of shame and curiosity that propelled me recently to examine the hard edges of high-school football in my country.

I drove out Interstate 26 to see one of the old gods, and as I glided along I realized how Columbia had changed since I had finished high school. The clusters of apartments, condominiums, McDonald's, Hardees and Burger Kings had pushed the land away. The South itself had undergone monumental changes—Jimmy Carter was the Democratic nominee, blacks held elective office, and the KKK was a cartoon of its former self. But surely high-school football contained much of its old sparkle and elixir.

Reed Charpia would know. I had first seen Reed when he was the star running back for Newberry College in the early 1960s. He came from Charleston, S.C., and spoke with a wisp of Gullah brogue. His skin and hair were golden then, and the gold had faded little over the years.

Reed had become the head coach of Irmo High School last season. He had taken a 5-6 team and turned it into an 11-3 runner-up for the state championship.

Inside the sprawling brick Irmo complex, Reed is seated behind the desk in his green air-conditioned of-

fice. He is wearing a navy-blue ban-lon shirt, olive-green shorts and sand-colored tennis shoes.

"Coach," a player comes in and asks Reed, "can't we run early today? I'm s'pose to go someplace with my parents tonight."

A tinge of color flashes through Reed's tan. "No way," he says. "If we're gonna do it right, we gonna run together. You s'posed to be down here with the rest of the boys." The player looks at the floor, a hulking assistant coach looks at the floor. I look at the floor. Reed continues. "Now you're a senior, and anything you do, the rest of the boys'll do, you understand?"

"Yessir," the player mumbles and leaves.

The assistant, who is introduced as Greg, takes a chair next to mine by Reed's desk. Greg continues to scan the floor.

"How's the team comin'?" I ask Reed.

He leans back in his chair and says, "Frank, I was coaching in Summerville [a moss-laden small town downstate] and I didn't know much about this team. I got here and found I only had thirteen men."

"Well," I suggest, "that gave you a nucleus."

"Hold it," Reed goes on. "Six that started. And two of those quit. Right, coach?"

"S'right," coach Greg says, still looking away.

"Two on offense and two on defense. And one of those had a new position."

"Right," coach says. "So I really started from scratch. You see what I'm sayin'?"

"Reed," I ask, "what is it that makes our football—South Carolina football—different from the rest of the country?"

"Well—" Reed pauses, letting the thought hang like a dirigible, then says, "It's a different kind of people down here." He points at coach Greg. "Coach here was first up in Philadelphia. He's got in-laws up there. Said he wouldn't go back up there for a hunnerd thousand dollars. Right, coach?"



"Right."

"Said he turned on the TV and they was somebody talkin' about how it had been a good day in Philadelphia. Wasn't but three rapes."

We all laugh, but Reed goes on. "He got to New York and it was even worse. A murder here, a murder there. They don't even report the rapes." He waits. "Now how can you expect a fella to get in his car and cruise on over to the high-school ball field if he's got to worry about how many holes he's gonna get in his head?"

Reed laughs. "Naw. Coach didn't like it up there. He'd rather be working offensive line for me." Coach Greg smiles and nods and leaves the room.

Then Reed's face grows serious. "You know, Frank," he says, shaking his head, "football has been a kind of rallying point down here." He stares at the wall without even seeing it. "Fifteen years ago when you and I were in school, playin' football was all it was."

"Are you sayin' it's not that way now?"

Reed nods very slowly. "It's different, Frank. These kids got TR-Sixes, Jaguars, TransAms. Hell, they've got *jet planes* in those parkin' lots. The kids today got too much to do. Cars, girls, swimming—and worse than that they like to work."

I was confused. "Work?"

"Yeah," his voice rises. "I mean a lot of 'em are gettin' jobs." He grimaces at the thought. "Frank, I'll bet you won't find one of those kids without three or four dollars in his pocket. They all got money and they simply are not interested in sacrificing for the important things."

He nods gravely. "See—when we played football, Frank, it was an end in itself. It meant self-discipline and becoming a man. We *sacrificed* for football, but these kids are moving in a different direction. All they want to do is make money. I mean, football, Frank, it's just—" he grabs up a pencil on his desk—"it's just not enough any more. I don't understand it. They're *satisfied*. You and I weren't satisfied, Frank.

Ball playing no longer means anything—and it used to mean *everything*."

"It did," I say, surprised by his revelation.

"Listen," Reed says sharply, "you won't *believe* this. You know what our own Irmo kids'll say to my players? 'Y'all are gonna lose.' " He snaps the pencil. "They walk around almost *hoping* we'll lose. And our attendance is way off. The band still comes, their section is filled. But the regular students, they don't come—they got a don't-give-a-damn attitude about football, about their team."

"Why are they against football? It must go beyond the fact that they're personally more interested in making money. Why are they so negative?"

"Some people are always looking at the negative side of things these days. They forget that football was meant to *mold* young people—not to be attacked by them."

I excuse myself, telling Reed that I'll be back to see how his team responds in a practice session.

"Where you goin'?" he asks.

"To see Whiny Ingram," I answer. "He coached for thirty-five years; he oughta have a feel for the changes."

"Yeah," Reed says. "If he doesn't know, he'll tell you anyway."

James Wyman Ingram coached football at Lexington High School from 1935-68, winning 218 games and losing 77. "Whiny" lives across the street from a massive grammar school in a white frame house with an American flag hanging from a front-porch column.

The coach greets me with a hard handshake and a tight smile. He still keeps a neat white crewcut, but his once iron-flat stomach is barrelling out larger and larger with each year. Whiny got his nickname when, as a quarterback for Newberry College, his voice had not changed and it squeaked every time he called out signals. The name stuck like a dried decal on a farm truck, because even after his voice changed Whiny al-

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# Style

CONTINUED

ways whined. Once the sports editor of a local paper called to ask about the impending season and Whiny said, "Jake I don't even think we gone *score* this year." His team limped to a 10-1 season.

I ask Whiny if he's noted major changes in our country's high-school football. We are sitting in his living room across from a large television set—given to him by the local booster club—which supports a miniature flag and a book entitled *Prayer Ancient and Modern* by Mary Wilder Tileston.

"I have to admit, son, it's changed," Whiny says. "I go over there every year to the practices and I've seen it." He begins to flip through a dog-eared scrapbook on his lap. "There's a theory I got. You know, you can't push these kids today like I could boys your age. And there's two reasons." He lowers his voice confidentially. "One," he says, squinting, "is air-conditioning." He waits. I nod, hoping to hear more. "If—" he frowns. "If a boy's got air-conditioning, what's he gonna do? He's gonna lay around the house. But, shoot, in your day didn't nobody have it. Did you have it?"

Whiny slaps the scrapbook. "'Course you didn't have it. So what'd you do?"

"Well—I—"

"Well nothing," he interrupts. "You played football just like everybody else."

"But I—"

"These kids today had rather lie around the house in that cool good-for-nothing air-conditioning. It's disgusting."

"Well, what about your other theory?"

Whiny looks furtively out the win-

dow. "I don't know if I oughta talk about it."

He moves closer to me, voice skittering above a whisper. "Well, these boys today they got cars, liquor, entertainment and one other thing. And it's the main problem."

Whiny pauses a long moment. Then his voice is so low that I lean toward him, straining. "Listen to me, son, 'cause here's the other thing—it's too many girls givin' in. Why, in your day if a girl did what they do she'd be tainted and y'all wouldn't have nothin' to do with her. But now they're all—I mean, even the nice ones—they're *all* doin' it."

Then in a rush of desperation to make up for the Altered Age, the coach serves up his clippings, burnt sienna photographs, neatly sheared boys, flint-eyed, unquestioning, full of the Calvinist spirit. The old coach, clouded and confused and bewildered by the air-conditioned present, was offering me the totems of his own Lost America. For him, cool rooms and warm girls were the objective correlative through which a profound spiritual crumbling could be seen.

From Whiny's house I go to consult one of the symbols of the shattered time, a cheerleader from the early 1970s. Phyllis Womack still has the shape, gold-brown hair and shimmering brown eyes of her high-school days in Charleston.

"I'll be honest," she says, sipping a Lite beer in her apartment. "To be a cheerleader was to be the *top*. It meant that everyone looked at you. I went with the captain of the football team. His name was David. You see, for me high school was my friend, a fun thing. But the war, the war in Vietnam changed things. Many of the kids were eighteen and old enough to die. They realized that and it didn't make sense."

Phyllis' own awakening came after David graduated and joined the Green Berets. "David was the best," she says, her words spilling out. "Clean-cut, handsome, captain of the football team, the leader. Then he became a Green Beret, and

he would come see me when he had weekend passes or leave. He had let his hair grow, and he started wearing sandals and writing poetry. That got him in trouble. Then one day an FBI agent came to my house and told me David had deserted the Green Berets and gone to Canada."

Her words come harder now. "I kept saying, 'You don't understand David, you don't really know him.' Then my mother burned his poems. They were about his view of America—they were beautiful. I guess my mother didn't understand."

Cars. Girls. Air-conditioning. Vietnam. The restructuring of order. As I leave Phyllis, I ask one final question: "Do you still have your cheerleader uniform?"

"Oh, yes." She smiles. "It's like saving a costume from an old play. Hell," she sighs. "I was glad to have a part."

There are no clouds. The sun is high in the white-hot sky. In the shadow of the Irmo High School stadium 45 players are sitting on the asphalt in white gym shorts and Adidas tennis shoes. Most of them have hair shooting from their heads like auroras. Coach Reed Charpia is standing before them. Some of the players are eating candy bars, some are sprawled out, lying flat, some are even listening.

"All right, fellas. Now, I know about half of you are not gonna run next week and in two weeks I'm not gonna have any mercy. Don't come cryin' to me about 'Coach I can't do it.' Fellas—in a few weeks we got to play Hannah, Spring Valley and the others. And you know what they play, don't you? They play *football*!"

The team looks vitamin-enriched, healthy, strong, powerful, and bored, the minds of most of them obviously elsewhere. Certainly no one looks hungry. Reed will run 'em, romp 'em, rack 'em and rock 'em, but the old ascetic, pigskin servitude is gone . . . and laid to rest with it are the old players, the old myths. High school football simply no longer matters *more* in my country. ■



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**I**t was a cool night, and a crush of fans waited outside Yankee Stadium, surging against the blue wooden barricades by the players' gate. The first-place Yankees had just beaten the Boston Red Sox, 1-0, in 11 innings. Willie Randolph, the 22-year-old rookie second baseman, had scored the winning run, racing home from second on a short single to left.

As Randolph emerged from the Stadium, he saw the waiting crowd. His infant daughter, Tanifsha, was tucked in his arms. His wife, Gretchen, was on one side of him, and his brother, Halley, on the other. Halley is 17. He looks a little like Willie.

Just before the fans engulfed them, Willie pointed at Halley and called out, "There's Willie Randolph!" Then, as the autograph-seekers descended upon his brother, Willie Randolph and wife and baby daughter walked off into the night, untouched and unnoticed.

Which is just the way Willie Randolph likes it. He wants to be noticed only on the field.

Randolph is one of the American League's top rookies of 1976, but unlike Detroit's Big Bird, who thrives on attention, Randolph avoids it. He has never believed in stardom, for others—"As a kid, I

never said, 'Oh, there goes so and so,' and tried to get his autograph"—or for himself. "I'm not what you call a starry-eyed fella," he says.

Yet Randolph is a star, or is at least on the brink of stardom. Of all the trades the Yankees made between the 1975 and 1976 seasons, the trades that turned an also-ran into a championship contender, none is likely to have a more lasting impact than the one that brought Willie Randolph, raised on the streets of Brooklyn, back to New York. For more than a decade, the once-mighty Yankees had been trying to find their way back to first place. For more than a decade, the Yankees had been trying to find a solid replacement for Bobby Richardson at second base. It may have been no coincidence that both searches ended in 1976.

The Yankees are playing a doubleheader against Milwaukee, and Yankee Stadium is practically filled. With Milwaukee in front, 2-1, Willie Randolph leads off the bottom of the seventh. He cocks his elbows, the left one near his heart, the right one behind his ear, and sends the first pitch on a rising line drive that carries almost into the left-field seats along the foul pole. The ball caroms sharply off the wall's aqua-colored padding, and the relay looks as if it will beat him to second

base. But he pumps his legs into high gear, throws his feet into a slide that curls the length of his body, and he reaches second before the ball does. He soon scores the tying run, and the Yankees go on to a 6-2 victory.

In the second game, Willie demonstrates his skills in the field. He sprints forward to suck up a sinking line drive off the bat of Art Kusnyer. He throws out fleet Von Joshua from the shoetops. He takes a Graig Nettles relay as Charlie Moore slides spikes-up into him, digging the ball out of his glove and pivoting off the bag in one fluid motion to avoid the spikes and complete the double play.

At the end of the doubleheader, few reporters approach him. Willie Randolph couldn't be happier.

"I don't like people making a big thing of me," he is telling me as we sit in the dugout before a night game against Kansas City. "I don't want to be anybody's *idol*. I don't believe in people giving me standing ovations like I'm some kind of god. When I get one, I try not to acknowledge it openly, because I might come out the next day and make a fool of myself."

Willie Randolph does not say a lot to a lot of people and I ask him about that. "It's a hard question, why I don't talk," he says. "But a lot of times a lot of talk isn't called for. A

# Hey, Say, Willie Can Play... Willie Randolph, That Is

BY KEVIN McAULIFFE



# Willie

CONTINUED

lot of people say things they don't really mean. I like to think first."

He stops to think, then says, "I look at baseball as something I *do*. I just don't feel *right* talking about it. Everything I do, I do out on the field. They see it. If I mess up, I know. My standards are to please myself, my Creator and my family."

Willie Randolph is a believer—literally—that "my life has been almost patterned. The way things happened to me, the way I had guidance from my parents, the fact they weren't afraid to smack me. I know guys I'd party with, hang with, who are dope addicts now, not doing nothing for themselves. I could've gone that way. But from the first time I was picking up ground balls at the park in Canarsie, the Lord above has guided me."

Willie Randolph was born July 6, 1954, in Holly Head, S.C., and the next year his parents moved to Brooklyn, ultimately settling in a project on Dumont Avenue in the Brownsville section. The family grew—besides Halley, Willie has brothers Terry, 21, and Timmy, 11, plus a sister, Deborah, 15. Willie Sr. worked construction and sometimes drove a cab at night while mother Minnie was driving fundamentalist Christianity into her children. And the only trouble their oldest son ever gave them was over his addiction—to baseball.

Neither Minnie nor Willie Sr. knew much about the game before their son began playing it, first in project stickball games, then morning and night in the fields of Canarsie. His mother approved; it kept him off the streets. But his father was another matter.

"He never had a mind to do anything bad," his father recalls today, "but Willie was the type of guy who would do what *he* wanted to do.

And we had a little problem 'cause this was the *only* thing he would do. But you can't push a kid too much. He'll turn on you. I made up my mind there were not going to be any more arguments about it. As long as every report I got on him was good, I gave him the green light."

For several years, Willie was under the tutelage of an old coach from the neighborhood, Galileo Gonzalez. Then Frank Tepedino, the uncle of a former Yankee and a groundskeeper at Willie's project, asked him to play American Legion ball. Tepedino became the first in a line of coaches and managers to describe the Willie Randolph Formula: Drive. Determination. Never Gave Me Any Trouble. Team Leader. Quiet Kid. "You'd teach him something," Tepedino recalls, "and the next day he'd have it down pat. It all felt natural to him."

"He was the prettiest base stealer I ever saw," says Willie's coach at Tilden High School, Herb Abramowitz. "Most of the time he didn't even draw a throw. One game, he was on second, I gave the steal sign, they called a pitchout, he was out by ten feet. But he moved his foot under the tag. When he was called out, Willie had to tear *me* off the umpire. He was always cool, a total sportsman."

Randolph's mother went to all his games, but his father stayed away, because, "Every time I'd go, he'd be overanxious." Willie Sr. did not push his son into pro baseball, but one night, at the end of Willie Jr.'s senior year at Tilden, two Pittsburgh scouts showed up at the Randolph home. The Pirates had selected Willie in the seventh round of the June, 1972, free-agent draft; they were offering him \$8,000 to sign.

Willie Sr. let his son make his own decision. Willie Jr. held out for a few more thousand, then signed and flew off to rookie camp in Bradenton, Fla.

At Bradenton, under manager Ed die Napoleon, Willie made the transition from shortstop to second base. In Class A at Charleston, S.C., the next year, manager Chuck

Cottier "taught me to always be loosey-goosey with your hands, never tight, to always caress the ball, keep your body in front of it so it didn't go through your legs or take a short hop off your chest." From those instructions, Randolph went on to develop a fielding style of his own, springing up from a crouch like a coil, craning his arms to box in grounders. It is a style that, given its jerkiness, invites errors, but insures that hitters are unlikely to blast balls *through* the right side of the infield.

He survived a prolonged batting slump in AA ball at Thetford Mines, Ontario, in 1974. The next spring he took 15 stitches on a double-play pivot at Charleston, W.Va., in AAA. "It felt like a knife in there," he recalls. But he came right back to master the gutsiest part of being a second baseman—learning to make his relay throw lower and keep sliding runners' spikes down. By late July, leading the International League in hitting, he was able to phone his parents to tell them he had been called up to Pittsburgh.

His mother worried that Willie would "be miserable sitting down," and sit he did with the Pirates, where Rennie Stennett was the second baseman. When the team visited Shea Stadium, where he'd always dreamed of playing, Willie did not play. In fact, he got into only 30 games all year, batted 61 times, averaged just .164. He was trade bait, and on December 11, his winter-ball manager in Venezuela told him what his family was hearing over the radio in New York: He was going to the Yankees.

He had mixed emotions about it. New York was home. It was also the publicity center of the world—and publicity was the last thing Randolph wanted. He was played up immediately—so strongly that he was the first rookie ever to get his name on the All-Star ballot.

"It's harder to play here, as far as privacy goes," he explains. "I'm a very private person. I like to be by myself. I like to think a lot. The only way I knew I was on the All-Star ballot was when reporters told me."

Roy White, the club's leftfielder



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# HOW TO EARN YOUR STRIPES

by Fran Tarkenton

## How to pass.

You've just thrown the ball. Is your thumb pointing at the sky? Wrong! You'll never throw a good pass that way. As you release the ball, *your hand should rotate so your thumb ends up pointing at the ground.*

Do you hold the ball in the palm of your hand? Wrong again! You should see daylight between the ball and your palm. Control of the ball comes from your thumb and fingers. (If your hand is small, just hang on the best way you can.)

As you cock your arm to throw, push your other arm out ahead of you. Then pull that other arm back strongly as you throw. *Don't follow through after you release the ball.*



Flick your throwing hand out and back like you were cracking a whip. You'll get a crisp release that snaps the ball away at a good velocity.



## Wipe out half the field.

I don't try to read an entire coverage. It's impossible. Nobody's got that kind of peripheral vision. My system is to read one or two men.

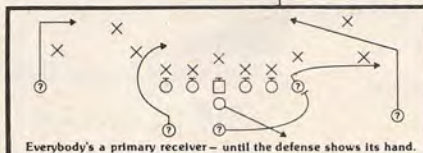
On a lot of patterns, I'll read the middle linebacker. Or the free safety. As soon as I get the snap of the ball, they're committed one way or the other. Their movement tells me where I'm going to go, which half of the field I should concentrate on.

I don't care if the defensive back falls down on the other side, and one of my guys is jumping up and down, waving for a touchdown pass, there's no way I'm going to see him. I've already wiped that half of the field out of my mind.

## Everybody's a primary receiver.

*There is no such thing as a secondary receiver.* Everybody starts out as a primary receiver. I might have five guys out there in the pattern. How can I be sure which of those five guys I'm going to throw to when the defense has maybe twelve different coverages it can run? The way the defense revolves is what dictates who my receiver is going to be.

It takes study—and good coaching—for a quarterback to learn who are the one or two people to read on each pass pattern. Read the right men, and they'll tell you who your primary receiver is.



## I play for the fun of it.

I love to play football as much as anything in the world. Even after all these years. I could be making millions of dollars a year outside of football, and I'd still play.

The most meaningful thing for me isn't winning this game or that championship. It's the struggle, the hope of getting to someplace. Sometimes you succeed, sometimes you don't... just like life. But you're using all the resources within yourself—combined with the resources of 42 other guys—to try and reach a goal.

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**When you've earned your stripes.**



# Willie

CONTINUED

and elder statesman, has given Willie Randolph advice on everything from vitamins to agents to pitchers' speeds—to New York-style scrutiny. "I don't think people realize how tough it is for a veteran to play in this city—never mind a rookie," says White. "A lot of guys say, 'I'd like to play in New York because of the media and commercials,' but it's the toughest place. The media demand more. Willie started off bad at the plate, but he didn't let it affect him. A lot of guys might have started fielding badly, or started experimenting with their swing. He didn't."

Randolph went three games without a hit, then caught fire. By late spring, he was batting in the .320s and leading Baltimore's Bobby Grich in the All-Star voting.

Randolph's early pace was too good to be true—and, in time, reality set in, first in the form of a nagging knee injury, then in the form of a sinking batting average. Grich beat him out for the starting All-Star post, and although Randolph was named to the American League squad, he had to pass up the game, to nurse his ailing knee.

But even if Randolph, at 22, was not a starting All-Star, even if he was not a .300 hitter, the Yankees were more than satisfied with the trade that brought the kid from Brooklyn back to New York City. He had demonstrated that he could field, that he could steal bases, that he could maintain his poise under pressure. For more than a decade after Bobby Richardson retired, second base on the Yankees had been sort of a joke. Fans laughed at Horace Clarke's pivot on the double play; they laughed at Sandy Alomar's power. The joke is over. Willie Randolph isn't a comedian; he's a ballplayer. "And," says Billy Martin, not a bad second baseman himself, "there's no telling how great he could be." ■



You can  
almost hear  
the sea

Wind Drift. It's like the sea. It freshens your skin while it stirs the senses. Wind Drift After Shave and Cologne from English Leather.\*

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The double-deep pocket of a Rolfs Attache holds any size currency, while Rolfs new Credit Guard keeps your credit cards clean and secure. It's just one of the many elegant yet practical leather accessories from Rolfs. All designed with a flair for fashion and attention to quality that people have always welcomed from Rolfs.

## ROLFS... it shows you care.

division of Amity Leather Products Company, West Bend, WI 53095



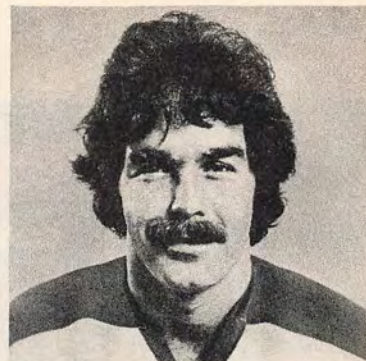
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Six Dingo boots that come on strong. Top row (l to r): "Freedom," "Entertainer," "Steerhead." Bottom row (l to r): "Condor," "Prosperity," "Ox-Bow."



# than one way to cut the ice.



(Derek Sanderson, Star center for the St. Louis Blues.)

If he's not making plays, he's breaking them.

If he's not in the box on penalties, he's out on the ice killing them.

He stuns the opposition. (And quite a few of the ladies.)

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Yet smooth and supple.

With handsome, full-grained leathers. And a fit that doesn't quit.

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Dingo® boots. They fit all your casual styles, and your lifestyle.

Especially if you walk tall and carry a big stick.

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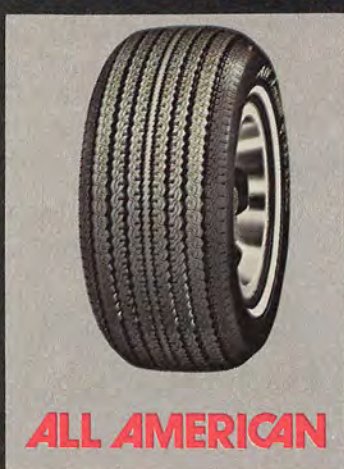
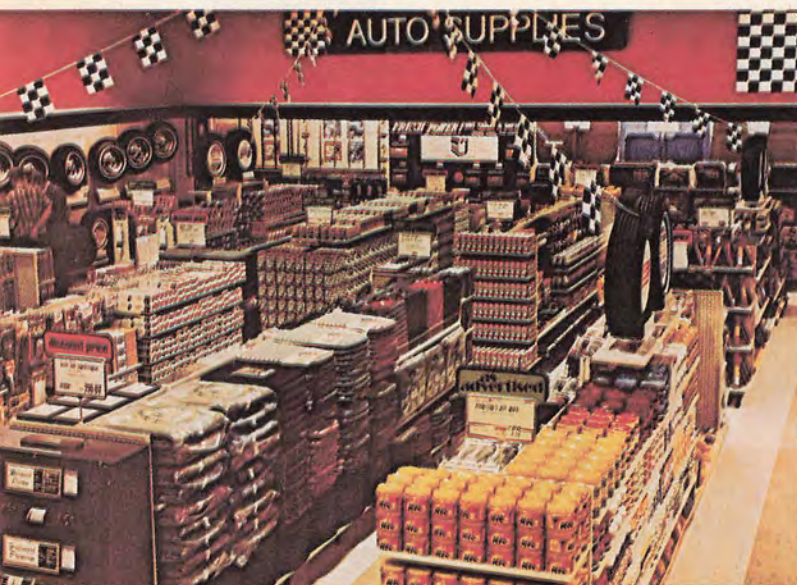
Acme Boot Co., Inc.,  
Dept. DS2, Clarksville,  
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A subsidiary of  
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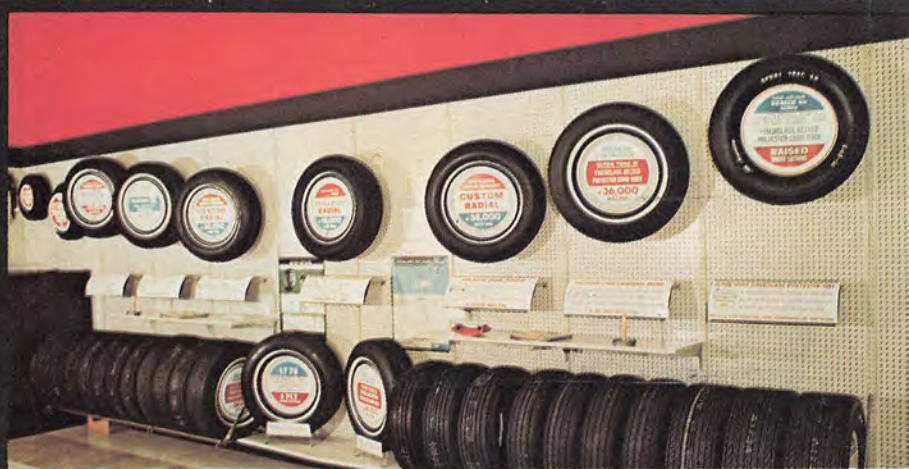




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**ALL AMERICAN**



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# DUCT SHOWCASE



# SPORT

## CAR CARE HINTS from... THE INDY 500

BY JOHNNY  
RUTHERFORD,  
Champion  
1974,  
1976



### Woolco SPORT

#### SHOWCASE PRODUCTS



Quite a few of the trackside "experts" at Indianapolis will tell you that 500-mile races are won in the pits, not on the track. Having won a couple myself, I don't believe it. Long races are really won in the garage back home where the car is set up for racing. If you arrive at the track with a car that hasn't been put together with consummate skill and meticulous care, the greatest pit crew and the most talented driver can't bail you out. Preparation is the total answer.

While the results are less dramatic, the same holds true for your car.

Maintained with care, your car will put you in the winner's circle when it comes to safety, expense and all-important peace of mind.

Perhaps the hardest item in personal car maintenance is remembering to do it on a timely basis. In my turbocharged Hy Gain McLaren Offy I can tell very quickly if something goes sour. But when you're driving your car for thousands of miles, neglect and mal-performance set in more slowly and are harder to recognize. It's easy to overlook the need for regular maintenance, easy to adapt to conditions in your car





# Rain Dance<sup>®</sup> lasts longer than any leading car wax.

Water beading proves it. Du Pont guarantees it.



We tested "Rain Dance" against all the leading car waxes...paste and liquid...and "Rain Dance" keeps on shining longer, keeps on beading water longer, rain after rain, wash after wash. That's why we can guarantee it will last longer on your car. Premium-performance "Rain Dance" is easy to use. It gives your car a fantastically brilliant shine because "Rain Dance" cleans deep down as it waxes. And that shine lasts longer.

Du Pont guarantees it.



**GUARANTEE:** "RAIN DANCE" is guaranteed to keep on beading and shining longer than any leading liquid or paste car wax. If not completely satisfied, return unused portion to B-4233, Du Pont Company, Wilmington, DE 19898, for full refund of actual purchase price and postage.

## CAR CARE

CONTINUED



that show up ultimately with large price tags and major delays as the penalty.

With today's advanced automotive technology, regular maintenance has been simplified. Oil change intervals are spaced further apart, spark plugs last longer. Today's auto components generally hold up better and today's car finishes are big improvements over their predecessors. All of this doesn't mean that you can afford to be lulled into a false sense of security and postpone maintenance indefinitely. With





MARCA  
REGISTRADA



\* MARCA  
REGISTRADA

ENT  
OIL

FOR  
MOTORCYCLES

SQUEEZE MOUTH OF CAN  
TO FORM POURING SPOUT

— 15 OZ. LEVEL AT

## DIRECTIONS

**CRANKCASE**—First time you need oil and every time you change oil, add **STP** Oil Treatment to your engine when it is running and warmed up. New and low mileage cars use one can **STP** to 4 or 5 U.S. quarts of oil (or 10% **STP** when oil capacity is below 4 or exceeds 5 quarts.) Engines with excessive wear, use **STP** up to 20% of oil capacity. **MANUAL TRANSMISSIONS, GEAR**

**BOXES AND DIFFERENTIALS** — Add 10% **STP** Oil Treatment to regular lubricant.

**POWER STEERING**—Use a maximum of 10% **STP** Oil Treatment. **GENERAL SHOP**

**USE LUBRICATING OIL**—Mix 25% **STP** Oil Treatment with 75% lubricating oil.

**ENGINES AND MECHANICAL ASSEMBLIES**—Add 10% **STP** Oil Treatment to regular lubricant.

50% motor oil, and cost filling engine parts.

all petroleum base oils and greases.

NET  
15 FL. OZ.

# If you want to help reduce engine wear and oil consumption, follow the simple directions.

Use STP Oil Treatment at every oil change and the first time you need oil and you'll be taking a helpful step toward reducing engine wear and oil consumption in your car.

STP's effectiveness was confirmed in a series of tests conducted by Automotive Research Associates, Inc. in 27 cars driven over half a million miles. In those tests it was clearly

shown that STP Oil Treatment helps reduce engine wear, and oil consumption, too. That's because STP fortifies and toughens oil... even a premium 10W-40 to help reduce the wear rate of lubricated parts in an automobile engine.

And if you'd like to know what's in STP Oil Treatment and how it works you can read about it, plus detailed

test results, in a free booklet available from STP.\* But while that takes four pages to explain, the directions are simple enough to fit on the side of the can. And if you want the security of knowing that you're helping your engine live a longer life, that's the next thing you really ought to read.

\*For your free booklet, write to: STP Corp., 1400 W. Commercial Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33310.



**PURE QUALITY.  
JUST LIKE ALWAYS.**







## **Worn spark plugs can cost you money. New AC Spark Plugs can help save you money.**

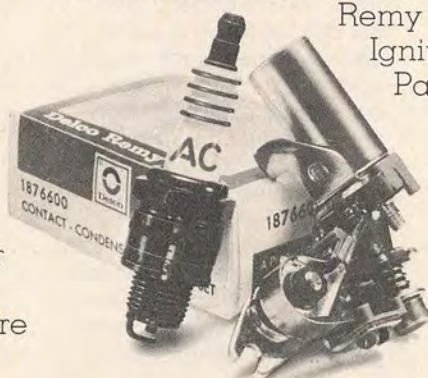
Worn, misfiring spark plugs can cost you plenty — in terms of money spent for wasted gasoline.

So if you're not getting your money's worth from your gasoline, it's a good idea to go under the hood and pull one of your plugs. It'll probably give you a good indication of how your ignition system is doing.

If your check shows you're

due for a tune-up, go with the names you know, AC Fire-Ring Spark Plugs and Delco-

Remy  
Ignition  
Parts.



There's an AC-Delco Tune-up Team engineered for your car and your kind of driving, designed to work together to help you get the mpgs and smooth performance you should be getting.

So tune up and go with the names you know. AC-Delco. You'll feel the difference on the highway, and at the gasoline pumps.

**Go  
with the names  
you know.**



AC-DELCO DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION



# CAR CARE

CONTINUED

winter rolling around, it's a good time to check your car out.

The first item on your list should be

your battery. Battery power is needed most in cold weather. Unfortunately, that's when your battery has its lowest power potential. Check your battery before it fails when you need it the most. It's surprising how many batteries go bad because their owners simply forget to add water. It's a simple matter to stick your head under the



- A. Performance Master Jr. Test and Tune Kit.
- B. Trio Oil/Amp/Water Gauge
- C. "All American" D.C. Power Timing Light
- D. "Maxi-Tune" Ignition Analyzer
- E. 180 Degree Electric Tachometer
- F. "All American" Dwell-Tach Tester

## THE "SUPERSTAR" LINEUP FROM RAC.

In these days of high prices and spiraling inflation, one thing remains constant — the real cost savings and the assurance of a job well done from a do-it-yourself effort. The SUPERSTAR lineup of professional quality test and tune-up equipment, gauges and tachometers, from RAC gives you the real professional edge that lets you do the job right. RAC is dependable, not only because it is the acknowledged leader in the field, but because its years of experience along with continual product improvement have resulted in products that stand the test of time and have earned SUPERSTAR status. So whenever you want The Superstars on your team, look to RAC... do-it-yourself test and tune-up equipment, gauges and tachometers.

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hood and open those little caps.

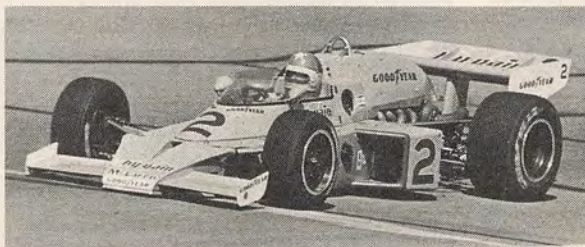
Anti-freeze is the next item on your winter checklist. Today's improved coolants last up to two whole years, where a short time ago they sometimes didn't last through the winter. They don't, however, last forever. If you haven't changed your coolant for two years, do it now. And even if you replaced it less than two years ago, have it checked anyway. Before you replace the coolant, clean out the cooling system with a good radiator flush. While you're at it, take a look at your thermostat. Every engine has an optimum temperature at which it operates most efficiently. If your engine is running too cool, it's inefficient. If it's running too hot, it's a candidate for a







# Johnny Rutherford. No.1 at Indy. Again.



This year at Indy, Valvoline® Racing Oil went all the way with the winner—from the first practice lap to the winner's circle. For some very good reasons.

Valvoline is one motor oil that stands up to the punishment. Of speeds of over 200 miles an hour—at close to 10,000 rpm's. Of mile after mile of intensive heat and piston-pounding pressure, at engine temperatures

three times greater than in passenger cars.

This year, 31 out of the 33 drivers ran on Valvoline. For the eighth year in a row, Valvoline was the choice of more Indy drivers than all other motor oils combined.

There's a Valvoline Motor Oil for every kind of car, every kind of driving. Make it your choice, too.



## Valvoline No.1 at Indy. Again.

Valvoline Oil Company. Ashland, Ky. Division of Ashland Oil, Inc.



# RISLONE ...

Good for Your Car,  
a Bargain for You

RISLONE is best for you because you get twice as much product as in the 'little cans' for just a dime or two more. It also replaces a quart of crank-case oil. That's a bargain!

Better yet is RISLONE performance . . . known for over 40 years. RISLONE preserves engine performance by keeping rings, valves, guides and oil passages clean. RISLONE dissolves and disperses harmful deposits. That's the RISLONE difference. It's the economical product that really works for your engine, not your oil. You'll find your engine runs better and quieter in minutes with RISLONE. And the RISLONE performance treatment lasts because clean engines start easier, run cooler, pollute less, go farther on every gallon of gas.

Test drive RISLONE today. Get it at your nearest auto merchandise store.



RISLONE National Championship Racing Jacket . . . \$8.95 prepaid. Quality polyester & cotton wash/wear. RISLONE yellow with black & red emblems & stripes. S, M, L, XL. Send check or money order to: RISLONE Racing Jacket, The Shaler Company, Waupun, Wisconsin 53963

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# CAR CARE

CONTINUED

boil-over or worse.

While you're at it, take a look at the radiator hoses and connections. Leaks at the wrong time (is there any right time) are one of the most aggravating malfunctions in motordom. Check out your fan belts. Tightening them properly will make them wear better and last longer. If at all frayed, replace promptly.

Next comes the ignition system. Cold starting requires a hot spark. A fortune in fuel goes down the drain every year in cars in need of tune ups. It's easy to get used to a car that isn't running well and not notice the changes which occur slowly. How long ago did you check your spark plugs, the single item which makes it all happen with your engine. When was the last time you had a look at your points?

Tune ups don't have to be expensive

today, either. With all the inexpensive auto test equipment available today, you can jump on the do-it-yourself bandwagon and save a lot of money. It's not really that hard to do, and the satisfaction you get from keeping your car running in top form is highly rewarding.

Filters are another component easy to overlook. A dirty air filter costs extra fuel and sacrifices performance. Pop the top of the air cleaner and have a look at yours. If it looks like it needs two weeks in Florida, replace it. Ditto for the gas line filter.

Remember when manufacturers recommended an oil change every 100 miles? I do, and it's really not that long ago. Today oil change intervals can be as much as 6000 miles apart. And for that reason we tend to forget them. However, today's engines which are geared to strict anti-pollution standards, tend to run hotter than they used to and they need good lubrication more than ever. Stick to the manufacturer's recommended oil change intervals, and when you do change, use good





**The Shell Answer Man:**  
*"The more you know about motor oil,  
 the easier it is to choose the one  
 that's right for your car."*



## Try this Shell "Fact or Myth" Quiz

The right answers could save you some money on your next oil change

Which is fact and which is myth? If you don't know, you could be overspending when you change oil.

*Fact or Myth?*

**Motor oil must be changed  
 when it looks dirty**

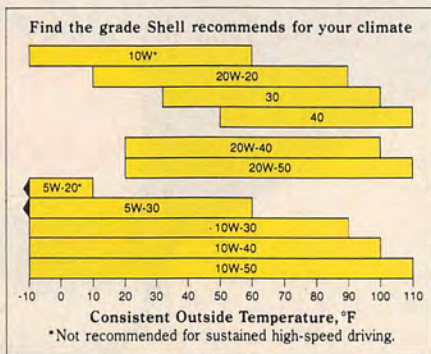
**Myth.** Just because your oil looks dirty doesn't mean it's dirty enough to require changing. High-detergent motor oils like Shell Super X® 10W-50 motor oil, Shell X-100® Multigrade and Shell X-100® can hold about a pound of engine dirt and contamination in suspension for draining at oil change time.

So don't rely on the appearance of the oil. Stick to the oil change schedule in your owner's manual. Don't change more often — or less often — than recommended there.

*Fact or Myth?*

**Motor oils made from Pennsylvania crude oil necessarily perform better**

**Myth.** Where oil comes from has very little to do with the quality of the finished product. The key things that make one motor oil better than another are how well it's refined and the additives that go into it. Those are the things that make Shell's high-detergent motor oils good enough to meet and exceed all U.S. car



makers' tough requirements. Look for Service Classification "SE" on the top of the can. It means the motor oil can meet your engine's requirements.

*Fact or Myth?*

**Viscosity grade is important in  
 choosing the right motor oil**

**Fact.** Every can is marked with a viscosity grade number. If the number is low, the oil is thin, flows easily and can help engines start quickly on cold mornings. If the number is high, the oil is thicker and can help protect the engine as it gets hotter.

More than one grade is usable at a given temperature. But you can't always rely on a lightweight oil to stand up to severe driving and high engine

temperatures. A multigrade motor oil will often help solve this problem. The chart shows which grades Shell recommends for different climates.

**Shell Super X** is a 10W-50 motor oil. It's Shell's best. The widest multigrade range you can buy.

**Shell X-100 Multigrade** is an all-season motor oil that provides high-temperature protection and low-temperature startability.

**Shell X-100** is a quality single grade motor oil available in 10W, 20W-20, 30 and 40 grades.

Look for Shell motor oils at Shell service stations and wherever fine motor oils are sold.

If you'd like more information about motor oil, write for our free booklet, "Questions and Answers About Motor Oil." Shell Oil Company, P.O. Box 61609, Civic Center Station, Houston, Texas 77208.



**Come to  
 Shell for answers**



# CAR CARE

CONTINUED

quality oil. It's also a sound idea to change the oil filter every time you change the oil, every second time at the very least.

Gasoline additives every now and then are a good idea too. Upper cylinder lubrication is very important today with the proliferation of non-leaded gasolines.

Have a quick

your shocks periodically. And don't use the now discredited shock test where you jump on the bumper and if the car goes up and down more than once, the shocks are supposed to be bad. Some lightly-sprung brand-new cars will bounce up and down more than once when you jump on the bumper. And some cars with stiff springing, like Indy cars, won't go up and down once even *with no shocks at all!* Also don't try to check your shocks by moving them in and out by hand unless you intend to use them by hand.

Brakes merit your regular attention for self-evident safety reasons. If you need monetary reasons as well, replacing linings or pads before they fail is eminently worthwhile. Scored drums and discs are expensive to resurface or replace.

Last, but far from least, tires are the most important safety item on your car. They're the only component between you and the road. Resist the temptation to get the last hundred miles out of a set. Today's radial tires can get between 40,000 and 50,000 miles per set and last longer than you'll keep your car. The peace of mind and secure handling inherent in good tires will more than repay you their modest cost. Tire inflation, a key item at Indy, should not be neglected on passenger cars. Longer wear and better gas mileage reward the regular pres-

## THE CLEAN TEAM CLEANS INSIDE AND OUT!

Gumout cleans fuel systems to give you better gas mileage, easier starts, smoother idling, less stalling, and reduced exhaust emissions. Won't harm catalytic converters.

Pour a pint of Gumout in your gas tank. It strips gum and varnish from carburetor jets and passages while you drive. Use Jet Spray Gumout to clean the outside and free up linkage, throttle plate, automatic choke and PCV valves.

look at your windshield wipers. If they look worn or they're beginning to crack, replace them. Wipers are very easy to forget until you really need them. If you were driving at Indy last year like I was when the rain came down, you'd really learn to appreciate a good set of wipers. Indy cars have no wipers at all, and there were times the track in front of me looked like one big pond.

Want a good price at trade-in time? Keep your car coated with a good polish. With today's modern paints, cars don't tarnish nearly as rapidly as they used to. They still need some protection. A good coat of wax now and then will keep your car looking as new as the day it left the showroom.

Shock absorbers may be the most misunderstood and abused components of the modern passenger car. A good set will last for 20,000 miles or more. But they do wear, even though the average motorist tends to adapt to their reduced performance. Check

A worn-out shock can show a lot of resistance to hand movement even though it's shot.

The best way to check your shocks out is while you're driving. Does the car dive dramatically when you brake hard? Does it tend to wander on the highway? When you're going around a curve where bumps are present, do you tend to lose control momentarily? All of these things are signs of bad shocks. Shock absorbers are one of the most important *safety* items on your car. Working with the suspension, they keep the tires on the ground. If the tires aren't on the ground, braking and steering control are lost.



## THE CARBURETOR CLEANER



A Pennzoil Product.  
Cleveland,  
Ohio 44104

© Pennzoil Co.  
1976

sure checker. When you drive a race car at nearly

200 miles per hour like I do, you develop a special appreciation of tires!

Ever try a CB? They're lots of fun and they can even be helpful. If you follow my preparation hints, you will hopefully never need a CB to summon help in a breakdown situation. You can, however, listen with amusement to quite a few less organized drivers looking for assistance. Come and see me at Indy next May. I'll be looking for my third big one!



# When a boy is ready for his first shotgun, he's ready for a Winchester.

When you give a boy his first gun there's something that happens between the two of you. Maybe it's a sense of growing together or just having a good time. But what ever happens, you're making a lot of dreams come true. To him, it's a milestone, a sign of your trust and his maturity. So the gun should be as good as the things it's going to mean to the both of you.

The Model 37A is a single

shot shotgun with all the quality and heritage of every Winchester. It has sure-grip checkering on a richly finished hardwood stock and forearm. A Proof-Steel barrel and a top lever that opens left or right for fast, easy handling and automatic ejection. All at a very affordable price. There's also the Model 37A Youth for the younger new shooter. It has all the same quality

features of the



**WINCHESTER®**

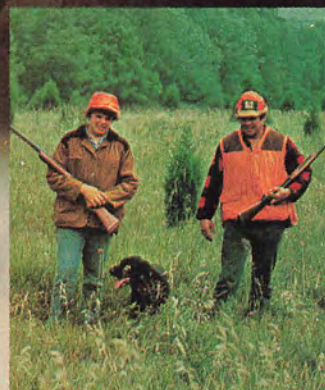
**more than a gun,  
an American legend.**

Standard model only a little smaller and lighter. Plus, a comfortable rubber recoil pad.

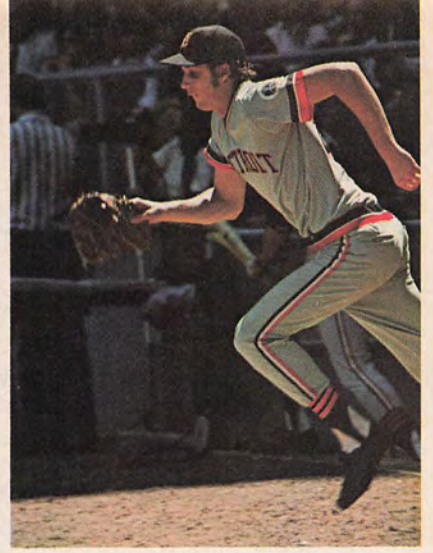
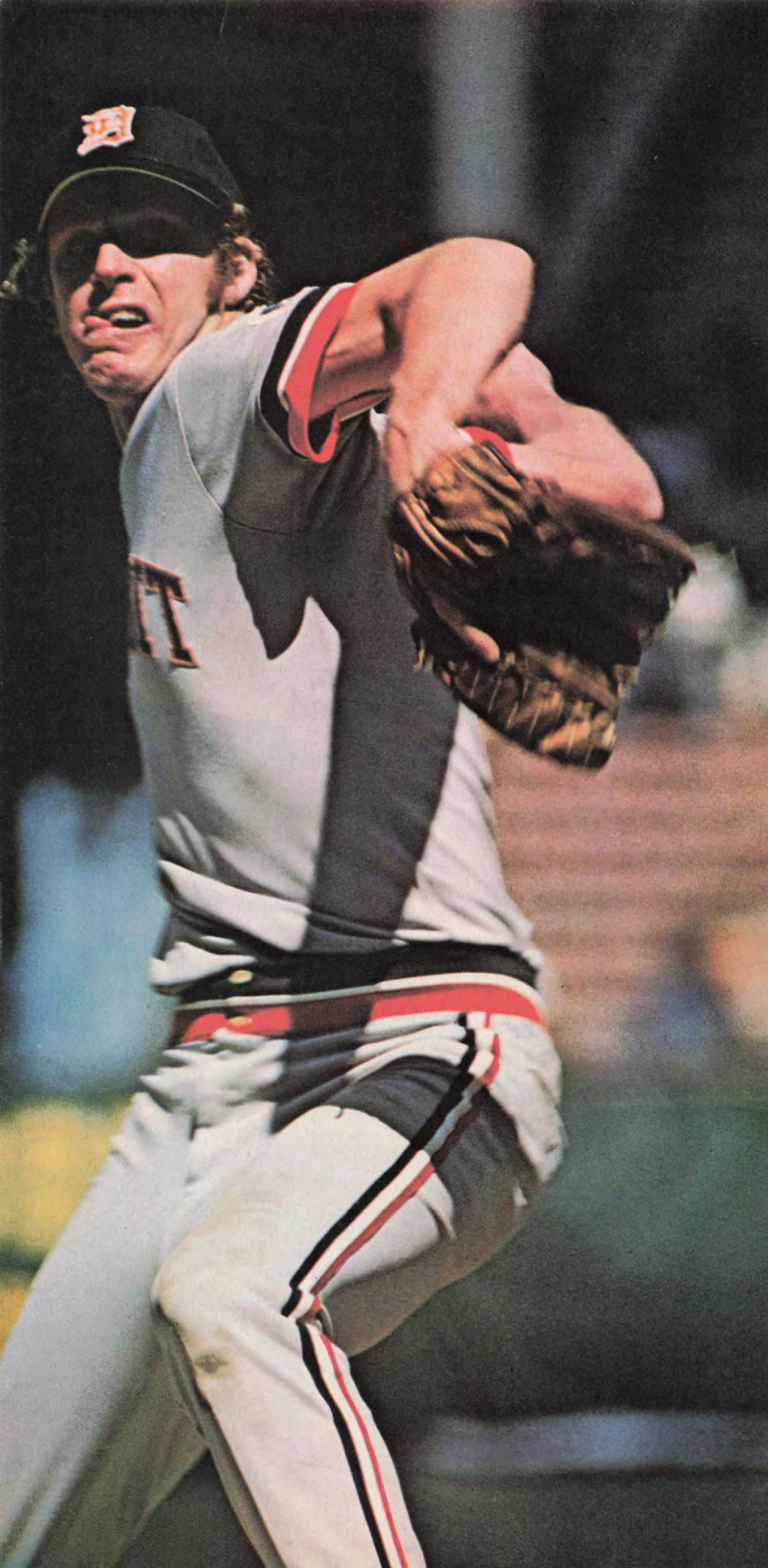
The Standard Model 37A is available in: 12, 16, 20, 28 or 410 with Full choke.

The Model 37A Youth is available in 20 gauge with Improved Modified choke, or a 410 bore with Full choke.

Give him a gun that he can give to his son. Give him a Winchester Model 37A.









# One Flew Over THE TIGERS' Nest

BY EARL McRAE

**M**aybe it could only have happened in Detroit, a city starved for laughs, this public insanity over a long, lanky rookie baseball pitcher they call the Bird. Because, taken alone, what Mark Fidrych does is not really all that hilarious or momentous, this talking to the ball before he throws it, this getting down on all fours and smoothing the mound, this shaking teammates' hands after fine plays, this running on and off the field as if he were getting in shape for Moscow and the 100-meter dash. Different and amusing, yes, but not hilarious or momentous.

Yet, in only a few months, the kid, a mere 22, has become summer America's newest and biggest folk hero for doing these things, a lovable, natural kook who is very serious about these things and doesn't do them to be flaky or funny or anything else and, indeed, is confused and a bit frightened at what's happening to him. They pack Tiger Stadium, 50,000 strong and more, to see him do what he does. They chant his name, snap his picture, stomp their feet, clap their hands, wave their arms and they won't go home until he comes out on the field for a final bow, which he almost always does, and then prances off in

that leaping, loping, balls-of-the-feet stride, his mass of golden curls jiggling, his head bobbing like a turkey's. And, for this, he gets a standing, roaring ovation because, and this, too, is very important, he has probably won the ball game, won it with only three pitches: A slider, a fastball and a change-up.

The people go home horn-honking happy and it's nice to see and feel and hear in Detroit because much of the time there isn't a lot to be happy about here. The Tigers themselves finished at the bottom of their division last season. The football Lions missed the playoffs. So did the hockey Red Wings. A major national figure, Jimmy Hoffa, gets himself abducted and maybe bumped off and the dateline on stories across the nation is, naturally, Detroit. An underground paper publishes a memo from the editor of one of the city's two dailies imploring his staff to come up with sex and crime stories for the front page because that's what people want and expect in Detroit. Murders *were* down for a change last year, only 685 compared to 804 in 1974, but still enough to keep Detroit ranking high in the homicide sweepstakes of American cities. The whites still flee the downtown at five o'clock

from Monday to Friday, don't go near it the other two days. Almost ten years after the riots, storefronts remain grilled and padlocked, the occasional half-crazed dog growling menacingly behind the bars. Still, progress, of a kind, is being made: Across from Tiger Stadium, home of the current madness, stands a building, red-brick and tumble-down, burned in the riots, and on the wall is a large billboard. It shows a guy holding up a cigarette and saying, "Kool? Coolest cool there is." He's black. That's very important in Detroit and very hopeful.

"What're you selling?"

He's sitting half asleep on an upturned garbage can which leans against a lamp-post outside Tiger Stadium and there's no one else around. "Buttons," he says, picking one out of a cardboard box hanging on a string around his neck. His name is Kenny Pyke. He's 45 and once worked in a carnival, which makes what he's doing now somehow appropriate, selling, for \$1 each, orange buttons with the words "Give 'em The Bird." He earns 30 cents on every sale.

"How are they going?"

"Naw. He ain't pitchin' tonight. People only come out when he's



# THE TIGERS

CONTINUED

pitchin' and tonight Roberts is pitchin'. But I gotta try and sell 'em anyway. I paid for 'em so I gotta sell 'em and I'm gonna stay here until the box office closes. Wanna buy one?"

"What do you think of this Bird stuff?"

"Well," he says, rubbing the back of his neck, "personally, I don't understand it, I'm not a baseball fan. But, you know, I saw Elvis once, back in fifty-seven and it was the same thing. People goin' nuts and all. This is sorta like that, I guess. We need heroes."

I buy a button. "Thank you. Come back tomorr' around this time. He's pitchin' tomorr' night. Man, you won't believe it aroun' here tomorr'."

Hal Middlesworth is 66 and looks it, a dour, sad-faced man who's been director of public relations for the Tigers since 1961. He sits in his office, this sticky afternoon, and remembers the ghosts of Tiger clowns past. "Oh, we had our share, all right. Boots Poffenberger, he was a pitcher back in the thirties, he used to do some crazy things, get the fans laughing. Germany Schaefer in the early nineteen hundreds. One time he came out with a raincoat and umbrella when it started to rain. But we've never had one like Fidrych who gets down like he does and who talks to baseballs. Never that. It sells tickets but, I'll tell you, Denny McLain had him beat a mile as far as the fans thing goes. Only Denny had him beat for the wrong things, the gambling stuff, the suspensions. He had notoriety off the field and the fans really came out to see him. But this kid's got them laughing more than Denny did. The public likes characters all right."

The afternoon of the following day, overcast and windy. The Bird

itches tonight. Chaos reigns outside Tiger Stadium. The air is filled with a cacophony of slamming car doors, honking horns, revving engines, police whistles, blaring loudspeakers, shouting voices and the scuffling feet of thousands as they stampede towards the ticket windows, elbowing and pushing, cursing and laughing. The din is deafening.

"Get your Bird tickets!" squawks the loudspeaker. "See the Bird! The Bird tonight! Bleacher seats still available at a dollar fifty—one-fifty to see the Bird!"

"Bird buttons," screams Kenny Pyke at the top of his lungs, his box filling up with one-dollar bills. "Show the world you love the Bird!"

"Tickets, tickets, who's got any tickets? Anybody got any tickets? Who's got tickets?"

"The Bob Dylan of baseball," shrieks a pimply-faced girl holding up an underground paper. "Read why the Bird is the Bob Dylan of baseball. Exclusive!"

"Bird bumper stickers! Get your Bird bumper stickers! Only one dollar for a Bird bumper sticker!"

"T-shirts! Bird T-shirts! Five dollars each. Get your Bird T-shirt right here!"

"Hey, hey, over here! Buy a Bird record. Listen to the Bird song. The Bird Is The Word. Hey, hey!"

"Stuffed birds, buy a stuffed bird! Only five dollars! Last chance to own your own Bird! C'mon, folks, gimme a break! Yessir, how many?"

Hopping around the sidewalk, bumping into people and bawling his head off, is a guy in a yellow bird suit. "Gimme a B!" he rasps. "Gimme an I . . . gimme an R . . ." while his wife chases him with a camera, clicking away, laughing hysterically. "The costume," I

shout over the bedlam. "How much?" He cups his hands around his bird mouth. "Twenty-six bucks a day! I rent it!" I shout back that it's a lot of money. "It's for the Bird! It's worth it! The Bird sees me in the stands, I know he sees and hears me and that's all that matters. Hey! Gimme a B . . . gimme an I . . ."

"Bird for mayor, recall Coleman Young!" howls a lurching, emaciated guy in a rumpled tweed suit, waving pamphlets with the Bird's picture. "Save the world! The Bird can save the world! America forever! Communism never!"

Battling my way through the mob, I enter the stadium and head down to the Tiger clubhouse in search of the star of the show. The scene at the clubhouse door is similar to the one on the street. "Mark, Mark," yells a little man in a grey suit and glasses, shoving a sheet of paper under the Bird's nose. "Sign here, Mark, three times. Just sign your name three times. Heh, heh." Fidrych reaches for the pen being offered when someone else grabs his arm, yanks him away. "Bird, there's some kids who'd like to meet you." "Mark, sign here!" "They're friends of my kids, Mark, it'll just take a second. Over here, Mark." "Mark, sign here, three times, that's all." "Hey, kids, here's the Bird, here's—" Panic fills the Bird's eyes and he slaps the paper away from his face. "What is this?" he cries out. "Sign for what?"

"A glove endorsement in Chicago," says the little man in the grey suit and glasses. "It's all right, Mark, just sign here, three—"

"A glove endorsement! What goddam glove endorsement? I don't know of any glove endorsement!" He pushes the man away, throws his hands to his head and storms across the clubhouse, shouting. "Leave me alone, will ya? All of you. I'm going crazy. If you want something, see my agent. His name's Steve Pinkus and he's in New York. Don't talk to me! I'm going crazy!" The little man in the grey suit and glasses turns and runs just as Detroit manager Ralph Houk

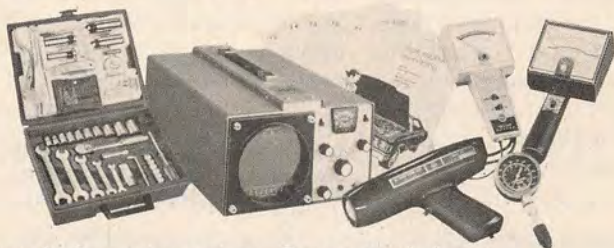


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# THE TIGERS

CONTINUED

charges out of his office. "What the hell is this?" he roars, his face red. "Clear out! All of you! Leave him alone! Shut that goddam door!"

I follow Houk into his office where he sits behind his desk and ejects a stream of tobacco at a wastebasket five feet away. "You saw it! *Squirt!* It's crazy and getting crazier. Sure, it's—*squirt!*—great for baseball, the publicity, but it's no damn good if he stops winning and if all this pressure keeps—*squirt!*—up, it could happen. So far, he's handling it okay, but you saw what happened out there today. It's starting to get to him. *Squirt!* I've never seen anything like this in my life. *Squirt!* I just wish people would—

*squirt!*—lay off awhile."

Fifty-four thousand fans are on hand for the game and they're not there to lay off awhile. The Bird has them up and roaring most of the night as he goes through his entire repertoire. He gallops onto the field at full tilt and he gallops off. If a teammate makes a super play, he charges over and pumps his hand, smacks his bottom. Before each inning, he gets down on his hands and knees and slowly, methodically smooths over the mound. Flashbulbs pop and the crowd cheers. He talks to the ball, cupping it in his glove, holding it close to his belt, his head bowed to within six inches of it, knees squeezed together as if he suddenly has to go and doesn't

know if he can hold. He spins his right pitching arm in a circle three times before going into his wind-up. He jumps up and down, flapping his arms like a seagull. If a teammate wants to confer with him, he doesn't wait for him to approach, but runs over to meet him. He vibrates with nervous energy. He winces and twitches and shudders and shakes and scratches and wins ball games—this night his tenth (against two losses), an 11-inning, 1-0 shutout against Oakland.

Ten minutes after the game, the fans are still there, standing on their feet, chanting his name, refusing to go home until he makes a final appearance. Suddenly, he does, tearing onto the field in his stocking feet, bare-chested, waving both arms and smiling wildly while wave upon wave of thunderous noise crashes down all around him. When he turns and starts trotting off the

**With Muhammad Ali on his chest and the original Big Bird on his shoulder, Mark Fidrych flies through his rookie season.**





field, the roar goes up, "Run! Run! Run! Run!" He obliges—and the place goes nuts again, cardboard cups and wrappers and hot dog crusts sailing through the air.

In the clubhouse he stands, fidgety and blinking, near his locker, a can of Stroh's beer in one hand, a batch of the more than 100 fan-letters he gets each day in the other. At six-foot-three and 175 pounds, with his beak nose and darting eyes, he actually does look like a bird, Big Bird of Sesame Street, which is what Jeff Hogan, one of his coaches at Bristol, Tenn., thought, too, when he gave him the nickname two years ago. Posters and drawings sent by fans adorn his locker ("A Bird on the mound is worth three outs at the plate").

"Were you worried out there, Bird?"

"Never." He takes a hit of beer.

"How's it feel, Bird?"

"Could be colder."

"No, the win."

"Oh. Very good."

"Sensational, Bird, just sensational."

"Hold it! Hold it. Praise the other guys, too. One-third may be me but the other third is them." He takes a hit of beer.

"What about the other third, Bird?"

He wheels around, his eyes wide. "What other one?"

Noon the next day and the Bird whips his 1975 Dodge Colt along Interstate 75 South towards Monroe, Mich., where he and teammate Mickey Stanley are scheduled to sign autographs outside a hamburger joint for two hours as part of a promotion. The Bird loves his car, his proudest possession. He bought it used after signing his Tiger contract in the spring, \$19,000 for one year, the major-league minimum, which he still earns despite attempts by some, including a congressman, to get him a raise on the premise, obviously a correct one, that he's worth a lot more to the Tigers than \$19,000. What these people fail to

understand is that the Bird genuinely does not want a raise. He doesn't need a raise. He lives in a modest bachelor apartment with one spoon, one fork, one knife, one cup, four plates and bed sheets for curtains. He thinks nothing of inviting strangers in off the street to listen to music on his \$1,800 stereo system, the most recent invitation going to two girls who pulled up beside his car at a stoplight and favored him with smiles. The Tiger management was aghast when it found out. "All we did," says the Bird, fingering the Our Lady of Mount Carmel medal around his neck, one of five given to him over the years by his mother who once thought he would go into the priesthood, "was talk and listen to music."

The Bird doesn't deny that he might go for a raise if he has a successful season but, how much, he doesn't know and he doesn't really care. "A raise might be a bad thing," he says. "Right now, I'm







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# THE TIGERS

CONTINUED

pitching real good on nineteen thousand dollars, but if I got more, maybe I wouldn't pitch so good anymore. Know what I mean? Like, I'm all together right now and the nineteen thousand is part of it. If they gave me a raise, it might ruin the magic formula, it might be too much and then I'd be not so good anymore. I just don't want to mess with whatever it might be that's making me go good. Look, what's wrong with nineteen? To me, that's a fortune, most money I ever made in my life. Some of my friends back home will never see that much." He yawns. He's been yawning since I met him an hour ago. "I'm tired. I didn't sleep so hot last night. It's starting to get to me, all these interviews and things, people hassling me. I just want to play ball, but the pressure is building. It's crazy, I don't understand it. It didn't happen in the minors, all this attention, and I'm not doing anything any different. I've always run off and on the field, I've always talked to the ball. But up here, man, you'd think they'd never seen it before."

Mark Fidrych is the only son of Paul Fidrych, an assistant elementary school principal in Northboro, Mass., and his wife Virginia. They also have two daughters. Fidrych was a good athlete in school, nothing exceptional and, when he completed Grade 12 with not one university scholarship offer in the mailbox, he seriously considered working in a service station, something he'd done in the summers. But he signed with Detroit and was sent to the Bristol Tigers of the rookie Appalachian League.

Despite not having a curve ball ("I just can't twist my wrist the way you're supposed to"), he rapidly moved up through the minors, winding up last season with Evansville, Ind., a AAA club in the American

Association where he won four, lost none and had an earned-run-average of 1.59. Ralph Houk invited him to Detroit's big-league training camp this spring as a non-roster player. The Tigers planned to send Fidrych back to Evansville when the season began. But the management-players dispute depleted the pitching rosters of several clubs, some veterans deciding to delay reporting to camp, and Fidrych got the chance to show his stuff in a few exhibition games. He showed well. Houk not only liked his stuff, he liked his uninhibited, somewhat zany personality. Before a large crowd in a game against the Red Sox, the Bird, standing on the mound, suddenly remembered he'd forgotten his protective cup. It just happened to be in his pocket. He took it out, dropped his pants, inserted it and carried on. Another time, he deliberately splattered chewing tobacco on his shirt front so the guys would know he chews like a major-leaguer should. When Houk told him he'd made the team, five days before the start of the season, the Bird borrowed change from the clubhouse boy, phoned his parents, asked about his sisters, the dog, the cat and then, almost as an afterthought, told them he was now a Tiger.

On May 15th, he started his first game of the regular season against the Cleveland Indians. He held them hitless for seven innings, finally winning 2-1 on a two-hitter. He talked to the ball, smoothed the mound on his hands and knees, raced on and off the field, shook hands with his teammates, the ground crew, leaped, flapped, scratched, twitched and became a national celebrity. After the game, he asked for the ball he used for his final out. Across it he scrawled: "2-1, May 15, 1976, Indians." [sic]

"Why do you get down on your hands and knees?"

"It beats smoothing it with your foot."

"Why do you run all the time?"

"Gets me on and off faster."

"How come you call for a new ball after somebody gets a hit?"

"Because that ball might have more hits in it. If it's got one in it, who knows how many it might have? The next one in it might be a home run. So I call for a new ball if somebody even just ticks it. Maybe the new ball has no hits in it."

"Balls have hits in them?"

"Of course."

"Are you superstitious?"

"Nope."

"What do you say to the ball?"

"Oh, things like: C'mon now, let's flow, let's flow, don't let me down, right down the groove, you can beat this guy. Lots of times I'm not talking to the ball, I'm talking to myself. It just looks like I'm talking to the ball because I'm holding it up. I might be saying things like: Hmmm, guy on first, guy on second, hmmm, I see, I see; what base should I cover if this happens or that happens? It's how I concentrate. Keeps me motivated. That way I don't rush my body faster than my mind."

"How do you handle losses?"

"Well, I've only had two but they bug me. I go home and beat up my pillow. That way I don't break things. If I punched my stereo, I'd break it, right? I pick up the pillow and punch it around the room until I'm not mad anymore. I beat the hell out of it. Then I have a few beers, lie on the couch and go to sleep."

From her home in Northboro, Mark Fidrych's mother is reluctant to discuss him at first. "I can't," she says. "I'm not allowed to anymore. His agent says talk to nobody, not about anything. People are ripping Markie off left and right, selling things in his name that he knows nothing about, it's just terrible. He's confused and upset. He phoned and said, 'Mom, I can't trust anybody anymore, everybody's out to take me, it's starting to drive me crazy'. He's just a child,



he's only twenty-one. I worry for him."

Virginia Fidrych is proud that he wins baseball games, but doesn't understand the fuss over his so-called antics. "He's always been hyperactive, Markie. Just like me, I'm the same. He's so honest and gullible, it's pathetic. Just like me. Markie's been talking to things as far back as I can remember. Bikes, wagons, cars, you name them. He never had to read instructions on how to put things together. He could just do it automatically. He's a genius that way. Things just come to him, the right way always just comes naturally. I can remember being in the house and hearing him mumbling away outside and I'd think he was talking to a friend but, when I looked out, it was just Markie, all alone, talking to a car or a bike he was fixing."

Recently, his mother was so nervous watching him pitch that she snapped her rosary beads. "Markie fixed them with his teeth. Don't ask me how, he just took them, put them in his mouth and, bingo, they were fixed. Markie is a very religious boy, you know. He doesn't show it, but he is. I once thought he'd become a priest but, well, I'm proud of him anyway. It's not always the ball he's talking to out there."

Earle Pierce, owner of the Northboro Sunoco station where the Bird used to pump gas in the summer, says: "Fid never took things too seriously. A big, happy-go-lucky kid. Joked with all the customers. Everybody liked him. And he never walked either. No sir. He always *ran* to the pumps. Ran to them and ran back, that I *do* know."

The folks of Northboro are rightly proud of the Bird. They have only one fear. "I just hope he doesn't become a celebrity in his own mind," says his mother. "I talked to him on the phone the other day and I said, 'Mark, do you feel like a celebrity?' and he said, 'No, Mom, why do you ask?' and I said, 'Because, people around here are starting to say I'm one and they're worried *you* will change.' He said,

'Mom, you tell them that when I come home I'll still be the same, crazy old unspoiled kid I was.' "

Not long ago, the Bird did come home. The Tigers were in Boston for a game and the Bird rented a car and drove to Northboro. He came home wearing the old, scuffed sneakers he went to training camp in, his favorite faded jeans and a frayed T-shirt, and he strode into Times Square, the bar where he and his buddies used to hang out and talk about girls and cars. It wasn't

the same. He was mobbed. They took his picture, demanded his autograph, touched his body until, finally, the Bird couldn't take it anymore. He got up, jumped in his car and sped away from his hometown. He may be the same crazy, old, unspoiled kid, but everybody else has changed and it hurts.

"Sometimes," he says wistfully, "I wish this had never happened. Sometimes I wish I was back at Pierce's pumping gas for a living and fixing old cars." ■

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# SOMETHING GOOD DID HAPPEN TO THE KNICKS LAST YEAR: Butch Beard

BY MIKE LUPICA

**A**fter six seasons as a player in the National Basketball Association, Butch Beard is now a New York Knick. He is also a cynic—for good reason.

*Fall, 1969:* Beard is a rookie with Atlanta, and one month into the season, he receives an induction notice from the U.S. Army. He tells the Hawks, and the Hawks tell him: Don't worry; we'll get you into a reserve unit. Beard never hears from a reserve unit. In the spring, he hears from the Army: Report.

*Spring, 1970:* Beard is stationed at Fort Knox, Ky., when Atlanta drafts Pete Maravich for its backcourt and lets Beard go to Cleveland

in the expansion draft.

*Summer, 1972:* After averaging 15 points a game in his first Cleveland season, and leading the Cavaliers in shooting percentage, and being selected for the NBA All-Star Game, Butch Beard is an established pro. Cleveland trades him to the Seattle Supersonics.

*Summer, 1973:* After a miserable season in Seattle, Beard gets a phone call at his home in Louisville, Ky., from Bill Russell, the new coach and general manager of the Supersonics. Russell tells Beard no one will be traded. "I thought that was nice of him," says Butch. Three days later, Russell's assistant calls to tell Beard he has been

traded to Golden State.

*Spring, 1975:* The Golden State Warriors are the champions of the NBA, and Butch Beard, a first-stringer all year, is standing in front of a podium at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, a big smile on his face, his arms spread in a victory sign. Two days later, he is traded to Cleveland.

*Fall, 1975:* Beard's family—his wife Ruth Ann, and his sons Butchie and Cory Allan—are in Cleveland to spend Thanksgiving with Butch. They have tickets for a Thanksgiving night game against Kansas City. Before the game, coach Bill Fitch calls Beard into his office and tells him that, six months



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# Beard

CONTINUED

after he helped Golden State to a championship, he has been placed on waivers.

"He told me it was the hardest decision he ever had to make," Beard says. "I wasn't even paying attention to him. I just wanted to get out of his office, out of Cleveland. Butch Beard was a loser again—any way you want to look at it."

When the Knicks picked up Beard on waivers last December, they were his fifth NBA team—or sixth, if you count Cleveland twice. He has never played more than two consecutive seasons with the same team. He has been traded three times, moved once in an expansion draft, been put on waivers. At the age of 28, Butch Beard is everything that the word "journeyman" has come to mean in sport.

"The feeling of rejection in my career," he says, "has been overpowering. I know I'm not the first journeyman in the history of professional basketball, but I sometimes wonder why I'm one of the chosen few who've moved so much."

Fans wonder, too. And so do sportswriters and sportscasters. For years, rumors have persisted that Beard has "a bad attitude," but the rumors are false. Beard is not a troublemaker, on court or off. He is, simply, a victim of incredibly bad timing—repeatedly.

Yet because the suspicion was that five teams would not have given Beard up were there not something drastically wrong with him, Knick fans did not expect much when Butch reported last fall. They were pleasantly surprised. The Knicks were 7-14 before Beard's arrival, and 31-30 afterward. He wasn't the only reason for the reversal, but he was a big one. He put speed and spirit into a sagging team. He had a fine season.

"Everything considered," he says, "it may have been my best. Not statistically, but I stopped wor-

rying about numbers when I left college. It's just that when I came to New York I was on the bottom, down and out, as low as you can go. And then to go and play like I did was satisfying for me, damned satisfying."

With the Knicks' \$700,000 backcourt of Earl Monroe and Walt Frazier often sidelined with injuries, Beard was always there, even though *he* played the last 30 games with a knee that required surgery for bursitis at season's end. Beard started when Frazier was hurt, which seemed to be any time Clyde couldn't touch his toes (he played in only 59 of 82 games) and he started whenever Monroe's bad feet became too painful. Butch had come to the Knicks expecting to play "ten or fifteen minutes a game, no more," and ended up averaging 23. He was everything a third guard in the NBA should be.

But once the season was finished, and he was back in Kentucky enjoying a leisurely summer with his family, Beard began to worry about the possibility of another change of address. All the danger signs were there. For one thing, he had played very well. His coach, Red Holzman, liked him. General manager Eddie Donovan, the man who wisely brought him to New York, had nothing but kind words and encouragement. And his teammates were filled with nothing but praise. "Man's a pro," said Monroe. "I honestly don't know where we would have been without him."

In Beard's career, this kind of praise has usually spelled trouble for him.

To this day, Golden State coach Al Attles describes Beard as "the kind of player every coach wants to have." Attles is one of the men who has done his bit to make sure that as many coaches as possible have had Beard. This past year, Attles did not have a guard who could run his offense in the playoffs, sometimes having to move Rick Barry to the backcourt. Attles did not win a championship without Beard.

"With the exception of Atlanta when I was a rookie," Beard says,



"I thought I made a positive contribution to every ballclub I've been with, and that I was gonna stay with it the rest of my career. And everyone has always told me the same things. 'Oh, Butch, you've done such a good job. *This* team isn't like the other teams you've been with. When *this* team gets a player, they keep him.' It's always been the same old song and dance.

"And me, I'm always left with 'why?' Don't you think I've run that little three-letter word through my head a thousand times? Maybe I should have been a bad mouth. Maybe if I'd talked back and caused trouble, then I wouldn't have moved around from city to city as much as I have."

But Alfred Beard Jr. has never been a bad mouth. He grew up in Hardinsburg, Ky., a little town about 40 miles south of Louisville, and played high-school basketball at Breckinridge County High. His junior year there, Breckinridge played Seneca High in the finals of the state tournament. Seneca had a young man named Wes Unseld playing for it. Wes played center, and was as big then (six-foot-eight, 240 pounds) as he is now. Beard played center, too, at six-foot-two and 155 pounds. Seneca won. "Wes, he like to have killed me," Beard says now, laughing.

The next year Wes went on to the University of Louisville, and Butch owned high-school basketball in the state. Breckinridge was 37-3 and won the championship. Butch was named "Mr. Basketball"—the highest honor for a schoolboy in basketball-mad Kentucky.

In 1965, Beard entered college and over the next three years, a couple of roommates named Unseld and Beard put the University of Louisville on the college basketball map. In Beard's three varsity years—two of them spent with Unseld—the Cardinals went to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's regionals twice and the National Invitational Tournament once. As a senior, Beard made a couple of All-America teams. "I walked around with a big head for a

couple of days," he says, "and then I forgot about it."

It would be easy for him to have a big head all the time in Louisville. He is still a celebrity there. In Louisville, they do not want to know about six teams in seven years, or hear talk about journeymen. Beard belongs to them. When he would limp across the U of L campus on his post-operative knee last summer, after using the training facilities at Crawford Gym, he was constantly stopped by people inquiring about the knee. When he would try to eat a quick lunch before returning to Crawford, a procession of people would file by his table in a campus hamburger joint called the Cardinal Inn.

Phil Bond, who will be a senior guard at Louisville this season, watched the scene around Beard at the Cardinal Inn with a smile one afternoon.

"It's always been this way with him, for as long as I can remember," said Bond, a native of Louisville. "When I was in the sixth grade, Butch was working for the parks in the summer. One day he was at the park right across the street from my house, Victory Park. Man, I called all my friends and told 'em, 'Butch Beard is across the street.' We spent the whole day trying to show off in front of him."

The Hawks made Beard their No. 1 pick in 1969, and he played 72 games in the regular season, nine in the playoffs, averaging 13 minutes a game and eight points. But the next season he became a playmaking guard for Fort Knox when he should have been doing the same thing in the NBA.

He joined Fitch and the Cavaliers early in the 1971-72 season. The Cavaliers were 23-59 that year and Beard was one of the few bright spots. "Everyone told me what a good job I'd done," he remembers. "Fitch made a big point of telling me how hard he'd pitched to get me on the All-Star team." Beard was too young, not cynical enough yet, to recognize his personal danger signs. Good season. Kind words. In the summer, he was traded to

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# Beard

CONTINUED

Seattle for Lenny Wilkens and Barry Clemens.

"I hadn't been real happy playing for Fitch, because I didn't think he knew what he was doing," Beard said, "but Cleveland was great compared to Seattle."

Lenny Wilkens had been the player/coach of the Supersonics, an immensely popular athlete. His firing was handled badly by owner Sam Schulman and Seattle fans were in revolt.

"I kept telling people that I wasn't Lenny," Beard says, "but they didn't want to listen. It was like they were blaming me for what happened. Shoot, I didn't have anything to do with it."

Beard was booed unmercifully. He walked out one night to find ground beef spread all over his car. Before being fired, coach Tom Nissalke juggled players all year, telling Beard at one point, "I know what guards I'm going to use, and you're not one of them."

"That's the only time I ever went to a team and asked them to get rid of me," Beard says. "But after Nissalke told me that, I felt I didn't have a choice."

After the 1972-73 season, Attles traded Mahdi Abdul-Rahman (formerly Walt Hazzard) to the Sonics for Beard. Midway through his first season at Golden State, Butch became a starter. The next season, he started all 82 games, and every play-off game. He was the Warriors' third-leading scorer, and he finished second in the NBA in field goal percentage with a 52.8. On his fourth pro team in five seasons, the journeyman won a championship.

"I can't even explain now what it was like," he says a year later. "I have won two championships in my life, one in high school, one in the pros, the two of them ten years apart, and I still cannot put into words what they mean to a player like me."

The week following the championship was a quiet one for Beard. He spent most of his time around the apartment he'd rented for his family in Foster City, Calif. One day, Beard invited a realtor over to the apartment, because he had decided to buy a home in the Bay Area. Surely, *he* had found a home with the Warriors. Surely. While he was sitting with the realtor, the phone rang. It was Monty Stickles, a San Francisco sportscaster. Stickles told Butch he was on the trading block.

"Man, don't say that to me," Beard told Stickles. "Let me at least enjoy this feeling of being on a championship club. Even if I do get traded, give me this week." Beard had the week, and that was all. Then Dick Vertlieb, Golden State's general manager, called and told him he'd been traded, along with the Warriors' No. 1 draft choice in 1975, to Cleveland for forward Dwight Davis. The journeyman was journeying again.

Beard normally hides his bitterness well, but he still resents the trade from Golden State.

"I hear now they were afraid I would pout if they started Phil Smith ahead of me next season," Beard says. "But, shoot, I didn't come to Golden State expecting to start. I just wanted to stay around and see if we could win another championship. But I had to go. They say they needed a big, strong forward. Well, hell, Derrick Dickey was a big, strong forward, and he'd just come off a great series against the Bullets."

"I know Butch has been treated shabbily by the game," says Vertlieb, "I really do. But we felt the youngster we traded him for, help me with his name"—Vertlieb is told the name is Dwight Davis—"could do a big job for us. It was a very tough decision. I agonized over it." General managers and coaches always agonize over dealing Beard. Then they deal him.

"We had six guards," says Attles, "and even though I'm supposed to be a genius at using a lot of players, I couldn't come up with

enough playing time for six guards [the Warriors' top draft choice was guard Gus Williams from USC]. Cleveland wanted Butch, and we didn't trade him for any other reason except that we wanted a seasoned forward instead of a draft choice."

Cleveland could not have wanted him very badly, and so he came to the Knicks, who were struggling, in desperate need of a third guard to back up Monroe and Frazier. Beard came and produced. He would average eight points and four rebounds, three assists and one steal per game. He would begin to defense the young, quick guards who had been absolutely killing the Knicks. And he would be ready to help every night. For New York last season, this was the stuff of heroes.

Over the summer, he would say: "If Walt and Earl play the way they can next season, we can have the best backcourt in basketball."

So why all the moves? Vertlieb says that "Butch tends to get down on himself, and when he does that he becomes ineffective." Attles says the same thing. One general manager Beard played for put it this way: "I think he doubts his own talent. He doesn't love himself enough to be a good athlete."

But Butch Beard, after six teams in six seasons, a basketball journeyman and a cynic, does not buy any of that.

"Just because I don't go around talkin' on myself doesn't mean I don't think I can play," he said one day this summer. "I don't think I've ever been appreciated for the talent I have. I never doubted that I could play in the NBA. I moved all over the place, yet I've never caused any trouble."

"The only thing I've ever wanted out of being a professional athlete is for my peers to say I was steady, and that I was a good ballplayer, which is what finally happened in New York."

Which means that by the time you read this, Beard could be someplace else, on his seventh team in seven years, wondering why again. ■



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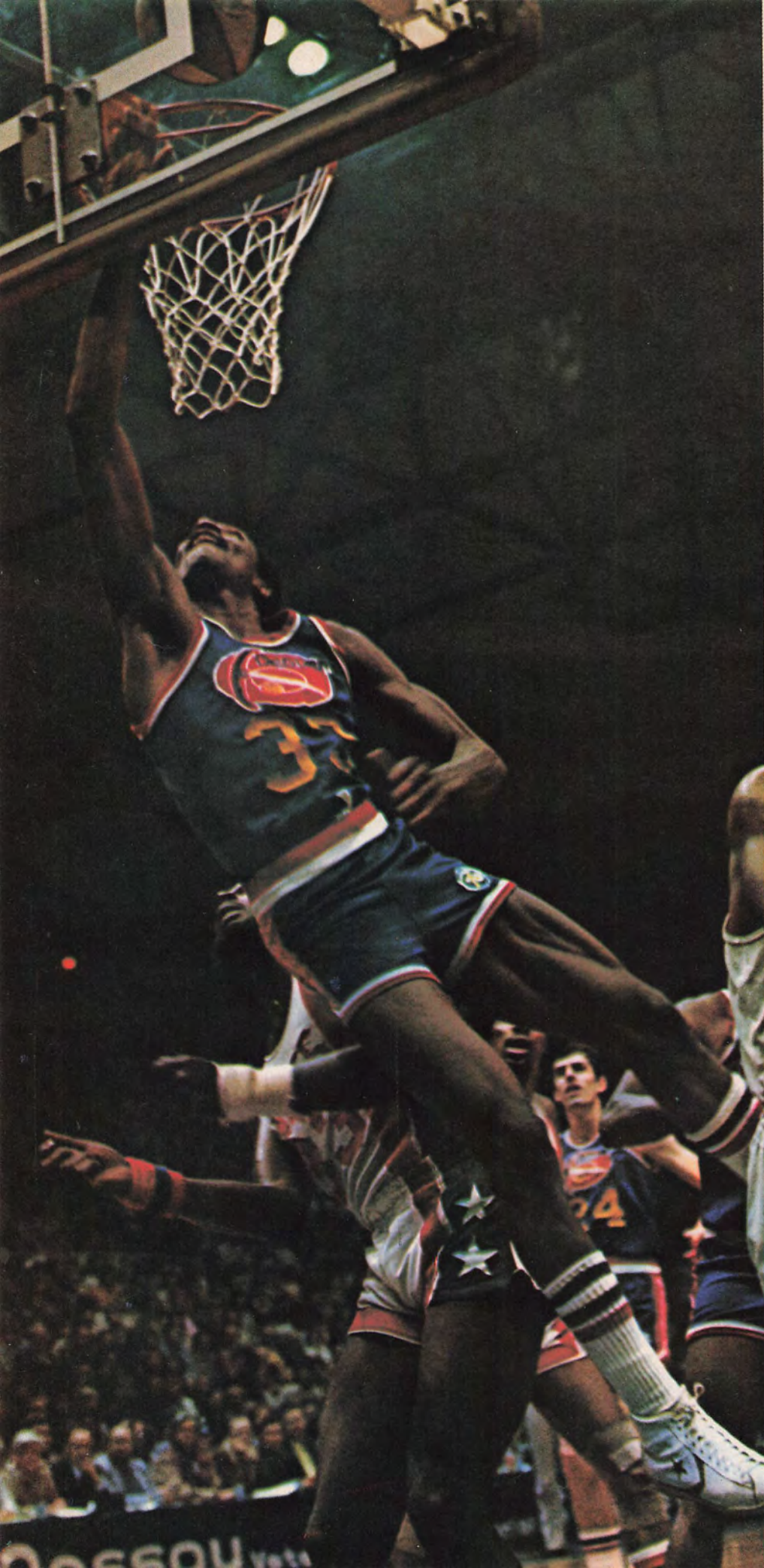
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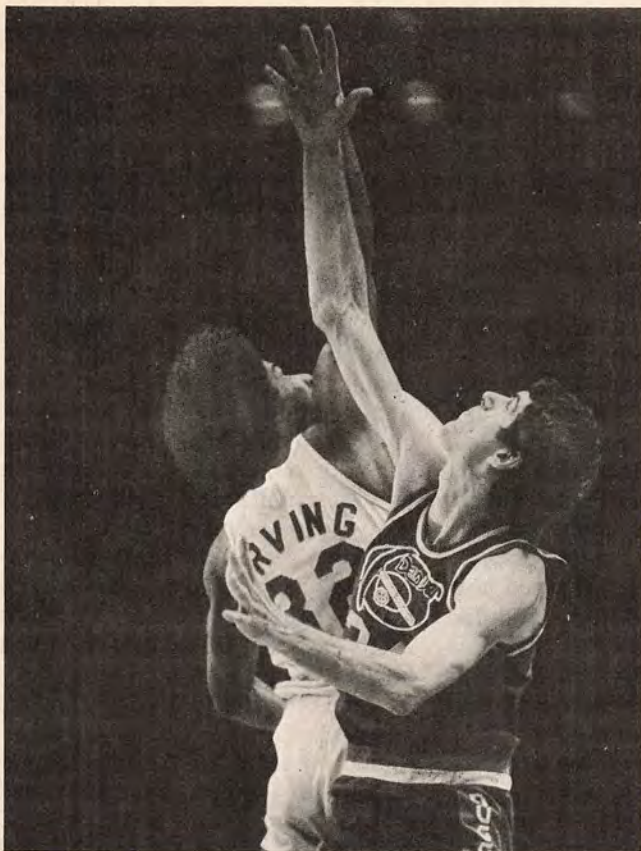
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With such stars as David Thompson (left) and Bobby Jones (above), coach Larry Brown (top) and general manager Carl Scheer (bottom) have good reason to applaud.

# CAN THE DENVER NUGGETS STRIKE GOLD IN THE NBA?

BY MARTY BELL

**O**n the afternoon of each Denver Nuggets' home game, the coach, Larry Brown, and the general manager, Carl Scheer, play racquetball. During their match before one American Basketball Association playoff game last April, Scheer asked Brown if he was planning to marry the woman he had been dating regularly.

"How can I?" said Brown. "I haven't won a championship yet."

Larry Brown wasn't kidding. He has spent four years as a coach in the ABA, and in three of those four years, his team won more regular-season games than any other pro team, ABA or NBA. Yet Brown's teams never survived the post-season playoffs, never won an ABA title. Until he wins a championship, Larry Brown is not taking on any other, lesser responsibilities.

Obviously, Brown takes his basketball seriously. He has had to—become a five-foot-nine, All-Atlan-

tic Coast Conference guard at the University of North Carolina, to become an Olympic gold medalist, to become a professional head coach, in 1972, at the age of 32.

Larry Brown expected to become the coach of a championship team last spring. His Denver Nuggets had finished first in the ABA by five games, and when they reached the final round of the playoffs, they were facing, in the second-place New York Nets, a team they had beaten nine of 14 times during the regular season. But the Nets, led by Julius Erving, won the playoffs, and now, at the age of 36, Larry Brown is bidding for his first championship in a much stronger league.

The stakes have gone up dramatically for the Denver Nuggets, and for the Nets, the Indiana Pacers and the San Antonio Spurs, the four ABA franchises admitted this season to the expanded National Basketball Association (for a basic ad-

mission price of \$4.5 million).

Their new home, the NBA, has the Boston Celtics, the 1976 champions; the Phoenix Suns, who were almost the 1976 champions; the Golden State Warriors, who thought they were starting a reign with their 1975 championship; and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Bill Walton and Pete Maravich and almost all the glamor names and glamor teams of recent basketball history.

When the pro football leagues merged—the National Football League and the American Football League—it took three Super Bowls before the New York Jets proved to the Baltimore Colts that the new teams were equal to the old. The Denver Nuggets would like to strike gold quicker. They think they have a glamor team, too, and a glamor star in David Thompson, and other people have also shown faith in them. When CBS put up \$21 million for the rights to televise the next



# DENVER

CONTINUED

two seasons of NBA play, the network offered a \$5 million bonus if the NBA and ABA merged—and if the merger included Julius Erving's Nets and the powerful Denver team that Larry Brown and Carl Scheer—who is president as well as general manager—had built in two years' time.

The Nuggets were originally called the Rockets and were a success in Denver until they lost Spencer Haywood following the 1969-70 season. By the end of the 1973-74 season, the Rockets had declined to the point where they finished tied for last in their division, averaged only 3,200 fans per home game and lost close to \$2 million. The team was close to disbanding.

At this same time, the Carolina Cougars moved to St. Louis, leaving Carl Scheer, the team's president and general manager, without a job. Scheer had given up a lucrative law practice to get into basketball. In 1968, he had negotiated a contract with the Seattle SuperSonics for Bob Kauffman, mostly because Kauffman went to Scheer's alma mater, little Guilford College. Scheer impressed Sam Schulman, the Sonics' owner, who recommended him to Walter Kennedy, then the NBA commissioner. Kennedy hired Scheer as his assistant.

Once, while representing the commissioner at an affair in Boston, Scheer stopped in the Celtics' office and found Red Auerbach, Tommy Heinsohn, John Havlicek, Jo Jo White and Don Nelson sitting around and kidding one another like so many brothers. "It was so casual and friendly," Scheer said. "I decided right then that if I ever had my own team, I wanted to capture that warmth and understanding the Celtics had for each other."

In 1970, Scheer went to the ABA, to be general manager of the Caro-

lina Cougars. The first two seasons were poor ones. Then, in 1972, Scheer hired Larry Brown to coach the Cougars. "Larry Brown didn't have to grow into the coaching job like most men do," Scheer said. "He had been preparing for it his whole life."

The smallest man in nearly every game he'd played in college and the pros, Brown had to use his mind to make up for his body. And he had polished his mental skills under shrewd coaches. "From Frank McGuire [his first coach at North Carolina], I learned to make great players sacrifice individual talents for the good of the team," Brown says. "From Dean Smith [his second coach at UNC], I learned how to treat people. And from Hank Iba [his coach on the 1964 Olympic team], I learned that the best offense is one in which all five players are always doing something."

In his first year with the Cougars, Brown stole Billy Cunningham from the Philadelphia 76ers and wound up in first place. But Carolina was eliminated in an early playoff round. The next season, Cunningham was sidelined for most of the season and the Cougars struggled to a third-place finish and another early elimination. Brown clashed with two of his players, Joe Caldwell and Jim Chones, both of whom played listlessly through much of the year and played dead in the playoffs. The experience was so frustrating that, when the Cougars folded, Brown decided to look for a college coaching job. But Scheer was determined to find another pro team and to bring Brown with him.

The 76ers asked Scheer to become their general manager. "But I wanted a situation where I could make my own destiny," Scheer says. "I needed a strong ownership position." Meanwhile, Brown had turned down the coaching job with the Kentucky Colonels, insisting he was finished with the pros.

In Denver, Scheer found what he wanted. He put together a group of local investors and acquired a piece of the team, plus an option to buy the rest. He changed the name of

the team to the Nuggets and then set out to rebuild the franchise.

Brown had finished his playing career in Denver. He liked the city, and he trusted Scheer. So he agreed to coach the Nuggets, with the understanding that he would retain only those players with whom he enjoyed working, even if it meant passing up more talented individuals.

"When I started coaching I thought I could rehabilitate people," Brown says. "But I was wrong. I don't have it in me to discipline. And fines are useless. If you can't surround yourself with people you are comfortable with, then it's not worth coaching."

Brown's training camp soon resembled a summer camp—old friends gathering for fun. He hired as his assistant Doug Moe, who had been his teammate at North Carolina and on three ABA teams and his assistant with the Cougars. He retained some of his former Nugget teammates—Ralph Simpson and Byron Beck, for instance—and picked up Mack Calvin, who had played for him at Carolina, and Fatty Taylor, who had played with him in Washington. And he passed up more publicized players in the draft to select a friend, Bobby Jones. Although Jones is a player who lacks grace, he works harder than any man on the floor. He had played for Dean Smith at North Carolina, which was where Brown got to know and admire him.

After collecting *his* people, Brown set out to teach them *his* style—or non-style. "We have no offense," says Brown, and he is only half-kidding. What he means is that he does not advocate the traditional offense based on set plays. He prefers calculated free-lancing. "Most successful teams like the Celtics or the Golden State Warriors come down and run a play and if the play doesn't work they free-lance," Brown says. "We have eliminated the play."

Brown calls his offense "the passing game." It is a controlled fast break. All five players run down court as if their train were pulling out of the station. The man with the



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# DENVER

CONTINUED

ball goes to the baseline, the center stops in the pivot, the other three players spread out around the periphery. The ball is whipped around the outside, each player then cutting in the direction he has passed the ball. Brown demands five or six passes before a shot is taken. The object is to move the defense so that one player will be able to take an open shot. When executed properly, "the passing game" results in everyone sharing in the scoring.

When Brown arrived in Denver, his first problem was selling the style to Ralph Simpson. Lured to Denver by a million dollar contract in 1970 after his sophomore year at Michigan State, the six-foot-five guard was one of the ABA's top scorers in three of his first four seasons. But he didn't do much passing, and the team wasn't winning, and, frustrated, Simpson made up his mind to jump to the Chicago Bulls of the NBA. Then Brown arrived and changed Simpson's role. That first year, Simpson's assist total jumped from 191 to 442, and his scoring declined only slightly.

Brown had created a happy star—and a happy bench. To maintain the pace he wanted on offense and the baseline-to-baseline pressure he wanted on defense, Brown substituted so frequently that he played ten to 12 people a game, with no one going more than 36 minutes. Over the course of 84 games, the teams on which a few players carry the burden will tire. The shuttle system may be the primary factor in Brown's regular-season success. In 1974-75, with Jones, Calvin and Taylor joining a team that had finished last the previous year, the Nuggets won 65 games—more than any team in pro basketball.

While Brown built the team, Scheer sold it to the community. Thirty-nine years old, with gray sprinkled through his brown hair

and deep-set tired eyes, Scheer is gaunt, his diet consisting largely of the antacid Maalox and malteds. He looks like the workaholic he is. He came to Denver, a large city with a small-town atmosphere, and decided that for his team to be successful he and the players would have to become deeply involved in the community. So he spent a lot of time in local bars talking up basketball, joined the boards of directors of three local charities and became fund-raising chairman for three others. He called on local businesses to sell season tickets and set up a league for disadvantaged children, using his players as honorary coaches. The Nuggets sold out the Auditorium-Arena for 29 of their 42 home dates.

But the failure to win a championship plagued Brown and Scheer. So last season they drafted and signed Marvin Webster, a seven-footer from Morgan State who was so good at blocking shots he was called "The Eraser."

Webster was expected to be the key to strengthening the Nuggets' defense. To improve the offense, Brown and Scheer wanted David Thompson of North Carolina State, generally considered the best college player in the country. To get Thompson—the No. 1 draft choice in the NBA—Denver first acquired the ABA draft rights from Virginia (giving up three players for those rights), then used a three-pronged attack (money, the city of Denver and the personality of Larry Brown) to outmaneuver the NBA's Atlanta Hawks. It was the first time an ABA team had ever signed the NBA's first draft choice.

Just before the season, Webster came down with hepatitis, leaving the Nuggets without a center. So Scheer went out and bought Dan Issel from the collapsing Baltimore Claws. Scheer also picked up a pair of backcourt men, Chuck Williams, a handsome and quiet Colorado graduate whom few people had noticed during his five-year ABA career, and Monte Towe, whom everyone had noticed during his college days as Thompson's teammate

and best friend at North Carolina State. The most noticeable thing about Towe was his height, or lack of it: He was five-foot-six, and any pro coach taller than Larry Brown probably would not have given him a chance. But Brown liked Towe's passing skills and his spirit.

With Thompson and Jones up front, Issel at center and Simpson and the relatively anonymous Williams in the backcourt, Larry Brown found he had a starting five that, in time, fit perfectly into his system.

Next to Erving, Thompson may be the most spectacular player in pro basketball. He is an accomplished shooter and good ball handler, but it is his jumping ability that creates the excitement. Although at six-foot-four he is four inches shorter than the average pro forward, Thompson plays mostly in the front court—where he often emerges above the outstretched arms of much taller men to peel a dramatic rebound off the backboards. Without wasting shots, he averaged 26 points a game as a rookie.

Issel had been the best center in the ABA as a rookie with Kentucky in 1970. But the next year, when Artis Gilmore arrived, Issel was moved to forward where he was uncomfortable for five years and finally sold to the Claws. He is at his best in the low post, using his bulk under the basket, and at his worst when he must put the ball to the floor. Brown's passing game allowed Issel to emphasize his strengths.

All five Denver starters last season averaged in double figures, and four had over 300 assists apiece. Playing in the new 17,500-seat McNichols Arena with seven new players, the Nuggets again won more games (60) than any pro team and drew more fans (over 13,000 a game) than any team in ABA history.

But while Denver was thriving, the rest of the ABA was floundering. Four teams folded, three others were looking for new ownership. Even the Nets—playing in the larg-



est market and featuring in Julius Erving the game's most dramatic performer—could attract only 7,000 fans a night. "Rome's burning around us," Scheer said. "But the Denver fans don't know about it."

As the playoffs arrived, it was apparent that if there were no merger, there would soon be no ABA. So Scheer, as head of the most stable franchise, assumed the leadership role and went to sell his league to the NBA.

"I am like a Cadillac salesman who goes into an exclusive neighborhood and sees a one hundred thousand dollar house with two Chevis parked in front," Scheer said. "I have to ring the bell and give those people fifteen reasons why even if they like what they have, they're better off with my product."

As Scheer frantically tried to work out a merger agreement, the last ABA finals came to Denver: The Nets against the Nuggets, the only fitting finale.

An hour before the first game, Larry Brown walked into the empty arena and sat down at the press table to tape an interview with Al Albert, the Nuggets' announcer. "What adjustments are you going to make for this series?" Albert asked.

"I don't believe in making any changes for the playoffs," Brown said. "We have won with a certain style of ball all year and we're not going to change now. If we play our game, we'll win."

An hour later, all the seats were filled and another 2,000 people were standing in the aisles, the fire department having relaxed the regulations for the event. Scheer said he could have sold 35,000 tickets.

Pressure sets in like rigor mortis at playoff time, and both teams seemed disoriented at first. By the second quarter, Denver settled into its style, rushing the ball up the floor, whipping it around, cutting as swiftly as an electric knife, sharing the scoring. Brown substituted frequently but the shuttle system appeared to hurt the Nuggets. During the prolonged season, playing a

dozen men keeps everyone fresh. In the playoffs, when you have a long rest between games, you win with your best five, supported occasionally by two or three others. But Denver was playing its game.

At the other end of the floor, the Nets depended on Erving. The Nuggets tried to force him to the outside, but time and again Erving slithered between defenders, rose high above the hoop and deposited the ball so easily that he might have been mailing a letter.

With four seconds remaining and the score tied at 118, the Nets tossed the ball in to Erving. He dribbled to the baseline and went up for an 18-foot jump shot. The ball went in, the buzzer went off, the building went silent. On Erving's 44th and 45th points, the Nets had won.

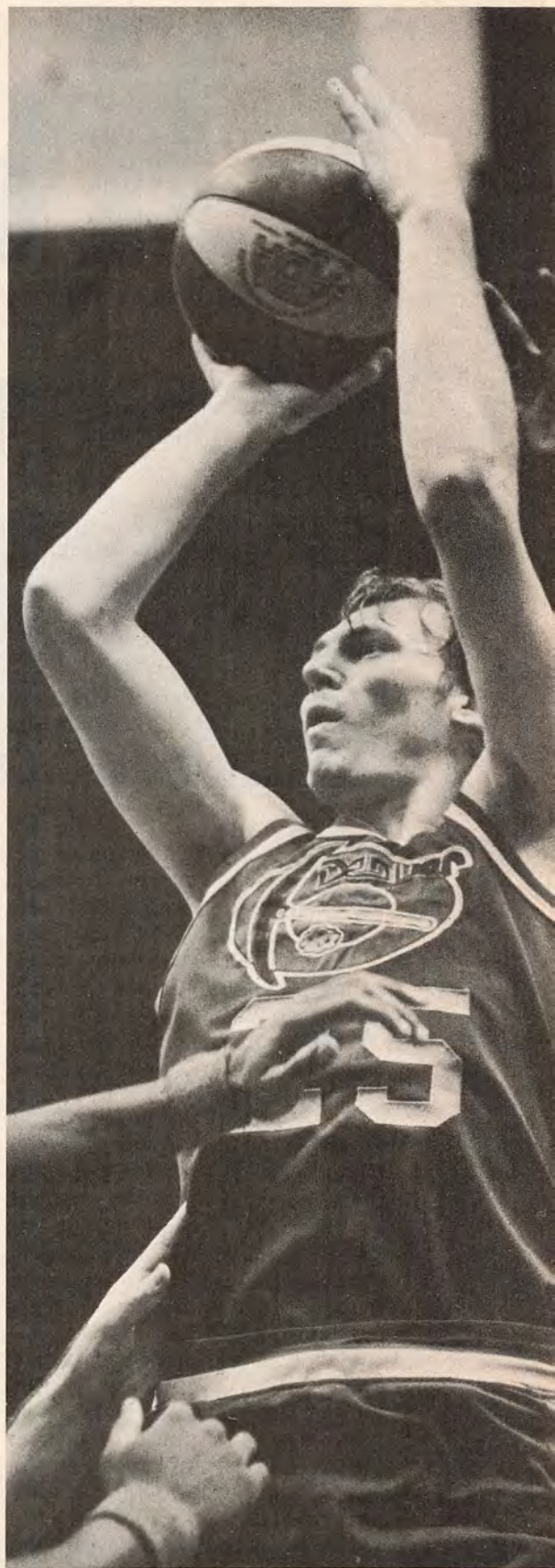
The pattern continued throughout the series. The Nuggets won the two games in which the scoring was most evenly distributed among them. But Erving put on possibly the most superb performance in playoff history—and he made the difference.

In the sixth game at the Nassau Coliseum, down three games to two but with the seventh game scheduled for their home court, the Nuggets built a 22-point lead in the fourth quarter, then watched it and the season dissolve.

After that game, Scheer sat in the shower area of the Nuggets' dressing room, his elbows on his knees, his head hanging. Brown sat on the training table, surrounded by reporters, unable to compose his thoughts.

Brown and Scheer are still without that first championship. This season they will have a healthy Marvin Webster from the outset and a team seasoned by victory—and by frustration. Few pro basketball teams develop overnight. They ripen. The Denver Nuggets are ripe. The team that never won an ABA championship seems ready for its first—in the glittering setting of the new NBA. ■

**When hepatitis rubbed out Marvin "The Eraser" Webster last season, Dan Issel (right) took over at center for Denver.**





# Olympics

BY DICK SCHAAP

# 76



I understand the Olympic Games now: It is the most dramatic confrontation among shoe companies ever devised by man.

This is a perfect example of the strange thoughts that pop into your head when you attempt to cover the Olympic Games. You realize very quickly that you cannot cover the Olympics; you can only cover pieces of it. All the time I was in Montreal, picking up pieces of the Olympics, I was calling New York to find out what was really going on. I knew that the people staring into the television screen, or reading the Associated Press wire, were getting the overall picture. I was getting only close-ups.

I could not see all the events, but I could see the athletes walking through the Olympic Village carrying boxes of Adidas track shoes or boxes of Pumas or of Pony or Nike or Tiger or one of the other major brands of track footwear.

I could not see the payoffs that were made by the shoe com-

panies—the prices that were paid to gold medalists for donning the proper footwear at the moment of triumph.

But the payoffs were as real to me as the rifles in the hands of the soldiers who patrolled behind the wire fences of the Olympic Village, on guard against any hint of an invasion that might trigger the bloodshed that stained Munich in 1972. I heard that a friend of mine received more than \$15,000 from his favorite shoemaker for finishing first in his event. I was happy for him, and for the shoemaker, and I was happy, too, that the rifles never had to be fired.

Commercialism, nationalism, racism, gigantism, shamateurism—despite all the isms and all the politics that scarred the Games, I enjoyed the Olympics. I was not moved by the opening festivities, as I had hoped I would be, but I was moved by smaller ceremonies: By the sight of Olga Korbut, once the darling of the world, sitting alone in

one of the cafeterias within the Olympic Village; by the sight of African athletes, some in sweatsuits and some in business suits and some in dashikis, crying openly as they left the Village at the command of their governments, some giving up a chance for a gold medal, some giving up a chance to gorge themselves for two weeks on fresh fruits and ice cream and candy bars; by the sight of the United States boxing team, 14 fighters and trainers, sharing one crowded apartment, without anyone throwing a punch, except when he was supposed to; by the sight of incredibly beautiful women athletes, their other features as stunning as their muscles (I am told, by more qualified judges, that the male athletes weren't bad, either); by the sight of athletes of varying backgrounds walking hand-in-hand through the Village or dancing at one of the discos or searching, desperately, for privacy, for a chance to be alone. It wasn't easy to tell which people were from which na-



tions; after the first few days in the Village, the T-shirts people wore gave no clue. I saw Poles and Germans wearing T-shirts issued by the athletic department of UCLA, and I saw a Russian woman basketball player wearing a T-shirt that said, "Buster's Liquor Store," and it looked as if all the tallest athletes in the world came from a nation called "Converse."

The ultimate appeal of the Olympics, to me, was its variety: It was a kaleidoscope of people and styles and events, spinning faster and faster, blurring and overlapping, creating sudden and sharp impressions on the eye and mind of the observer. Here, then, are one observer's impressions of the 1976 Olympics:

#### SATURDAY, JULY 17

Five hours before the opening ceremonies were to begin, Laura Staines and Sue Morgan strolled through the Olympic Village on their way to the adjoining International Center. I noticed them right away. Only a blind man would not notice Laura Staines and Sue Morgan. They are oarswomen, and if all rowers looked like them, crew would be the second most popular sport in the world. Laura and Sue were on their way to the International Center to find out if they were really women. Half a dozen men volunteered to administer the test.

Laura and Sue were going to take a different test—the chromosome test designed to separate the boys from the girls in the Olympics. A technician takes a cell sampling from the inside of the cheek, and if an athlete has a "y" chromosome, that athlete is genetically a male and cannot compete against females. Laura and Sue did not object to the test—"I like the protection of knowing that I am competing against other women," said Laura—and neither was worried about flunking.

"If I don't pass," said Laura, "I'm going to be very surprised. And my husband is going to be even more surprised."

A few hours later, Queen Elizabeth presided over the opening pa-

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# Olympics

CONTINUED

rade, and her daughter, Princess Anne, the equestrian, marched with her fellow British athletes. I looked, but I couldn't see Princess Anne. I couldn't see any black Africans, either, or any Chinese, from the mainland or from Taiwan. It wasn't my eyesight that kept me from seeing the Africans and the Chinese. It was international stupidity, which ought to be an Olympic event.

SUNDAY, JULY 18

The greatest athlete in the world stood on the balcony at the end of

the fifth floor of Tower D in the Olympic Village and talked about some of the sports he does not play perfectly. "Golf, bowling, tennis, ping pong, everybody wants to take a shot at me," said Bruce Jenner, the man who graced the cover of SPORT's Olympic issue, the favorite to win the Olympic decathlon championship. "And, let's face it, everybody beats me.

"Even my wife beat me once. It was in badminton. We were down in Miami, and there was this gale wind blowing, and I was hitting into the

wind, and she had the wind with her, and . . ."

Jenner hung his head, then lifted it and flashed his million-dollar smile. "No," he said, "I can't lie. It was perfectly calm."

MONDAY, JULY 19

By early evening, the story had begun to circulate, the story of Boris Onischenko, the Russian who had won the world championship in the modern pentathlon in 1970 and won the silver medal in his demanding specialty in Munich. The modern pentathlon combines riding, fencing, shooting, swimming and running, and on this second day of competition, Onischenko had been caught cheating in fencing.

He had rigged the handle of his epee so that he could trigger a score in this electronic duel without actually touching an opponent. Onischenko pleaded innocent. The epee wasn't his; he said he had picked it up accidentally. The Soviet team also pleaded innocent; no Russian official had the slightest notion that Onischenko might be cheating.

There was a rumor that Onischenko, a Master of Sport and a major in the Red Army, was being held prisoner aboard a Russian ship anchored in Montreal's harbor, another rumor that he had already been shipped back to Moscow, presumably en route to Siberia.

Before midnight, the Onischenko joke was making the rounds: The Russians told Onischenko that they had some good news for him—and some bad news. "The good news, Boris, is that we are not going to strip you of your medals. The bad news is that you have to marry Semenova."

Semenova was the seven-foot-two center on the Russian women's basketball team, the best women's team in the world. Semenova was awesome, and not only because she could shoot with both hands.

TUESDAY, JULY 20

Dozens of reporters discovered that Nicolae Ceausescu was the president of Rumania. They found out because Nadia Comaneci, the



Olympics' first perfect gymnast, sat directly under his picture as she conducted, at the age of 14, an international, multi-lingual news conference.

Like any decent star, Nadia showed up late. Then she handled the press as easily as she handled the balanced beam. She had already achieved three perfect scores of 10.0—no previous Olympian had scored even one 10.0—and before the Games were over, she would add two more. She would also end up with three gold medals and two silver medals.

Some of the reporters complained that she was cold and mechanical, but it is very hard to get emotional over such questions as, "What does your father do?" and "How do you like Montreal?" I liked the look in her eyes that hinted, just hinted, that she couldn't believe that grown people were asking her such pointless questions.

An hour later, I saw her walking through the Olympic Village, with her teammates, stopping to sniff at the flowers and clutching a doll.

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

In the space of half an hour, I encountered three of the larger American athletes in Montreal. I asked George Woods, the shot putter, if he thought the new Olympic regulations barring the use of anabolic steroids—potentially dangerous body builders—would have much effect on the weight throwers. "No," said Woods. "I can go either way."

Later, I bumped into Mac Wilkins, the world record-holder in the discus, and I asked him, "Are all those rumors true about weight-throwers being a little crazy?"

"Don't you believe it," said Wilkins, as he reached out and grabbed my neck in a massive paw. "We're not crazy." He loosened his grip. "We're just a little different."

Next I met Pete Lee, a 333-pound Greco-Roman wrestler. For an American, Lee was doing very well in Greco-Roman wrestling; he had come close to beating a former Olympic champion and he had not



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only defeated a Japanese heavy-weight, he had broken his opponent's arm. "Did you apologize?" I asked.

"No," said Lee. "I don't know how to speak Japanese."

#### FRIDAY, JULY 23

Track and field competition began today, and the distance runners, the ten thousand-meter men, ran their qualifying heats. Lasse Viren, the Finn who won both the 5,000- and 10,000-meter runs in 1972, qualified easily for the final. Like Bela Lugosi, the pre-Comaneci Rumanian star, Viren has been accused of playing Dracula. Not with other people's blood—with his own.

"Blood doping" is the latest gimmick in the world of *citius, altius, fortius*—swifter, higher, stronger—and this is how it works: An athlete will have a pint of blood

drained from his system, just as if he were donating it to the Red Cross, and have it stored away. Then, on the day of his competition, or the day before, he will have the blood returned to his system, by injection. The theory is that with extra blood in his system—and especially with extra red blood cells, which produce oxygen—the athlete will have greater stamina. Frank Shorter, the American marathon runner, is not himself a practitioner of blood doping, but he says that it is not uncommon among distance runners, particularly Scandinavians. Viren is a likely suspect.

#### SUNDAY, JULY 25

Finally, on the third day of track and field competition, the American team won its first gold medal. The winner was Mac Wilkins, the discus thrower.

After he watched East Ger-





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# Olympics

CONTINUED

many's Wolfgang Schmidt capture the silver medal—forcing American John Powell back into third place—Wilkins gave Schmidt a big bear hug.

Wilkins had said earlier in the week that he vastly preferred the efficiency of the East German Olympic Committee to the bumbling ways of the USOC, but his hug for Schmidt—he said—had nothing to do with politics. He was simply congratulating Schmidt for his performance under pressure.

"Is there genuine bitterness between you and Powell?" someone asked Wilkins at a news conference after the medal ceremony.

"No," said Wilkins. "I think we're friends now. But when our rivalry was going strong a few months ago, I found out that I was capable of hating an opponent."

John Powell, sitting next to Wilkins at the news conference, reached out and, with mock affection, touched his rival's hand. "We've made up," said Powell. "We don't date the same girls anymore."

## MONDAY, JULY 26

On a day when a Pole won the pole vault, a Hungarian won the javelin, a Jamaican won the 200-meter sprint and a bloody Finn—Lasse Viren—won the 10,000-meter run, the big shock was not in track and field, but in basketball. The Russian men, including many of the players who in Munich handed the United States its first Olympic basketball defeat ever, lost in the semi-finals, to Yugoslavia.

In the other semi-final, the United States defeated Canada so con-

vincingly you would think that an American had invented the game. Actually, as every school child knows, basketball was invented by a Canadian, James Naismith, who happened to be living in Massachusetts. If Naismith had been living in Toronto, basketball might now be Canada's national game.

## TUESDAY, JULY 27

The United States proved that basketball is not the national game of Yugoslavia, either.

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 28

The Russians earned their first gold medal in track and field today. They finished one-two-three in the hammer. They are also favored to win the sickle.

## THURSDAY, JULY 29

His friends in San Diego used to look at Arnie Robinson and say, "You going to go over and run Kelton today?"

And Arnie Robinson would say, "Sure, you want to come along?"

Then his friends would scatter.

**While Nadia Comaneci demonstrated the grace of Eastern Europe, fencer Boris Onischenko demonstrated the guile.**





# Olympics

CONTINUED



Kornelia Ender, the United States basketball team, Alberto Juantorena and Lasse Viren all struck gold in Montreal.



"You go run Kelton," they would say. "You got to be crazy to run Kelton."

The run up Kelton Hill starts next to one of the expressways that cuts through the outskirts of San Diego. It is not a very long run, perhaps only 300 yards, but it is all uphill, at a perilous angle. To sprint it is a torture only the Marquis de Sade would enjoy watching.

Arnie Robinson was laughing about Kelton late this afternoon as he faced the press in the Olympic Stadium and held up the gold medal he had just won in the long jump. "I

can go back now and hold this out, and say, 'You think I'm crazy now?'"

And after his victory today, Robinson said that he believed that the American government should subsidize its amateur athletes—pay the best ones a flat stipend so that they could devote themselves fully to practice. He says the present American system would soon stop producing world-class track-and-field athletes.

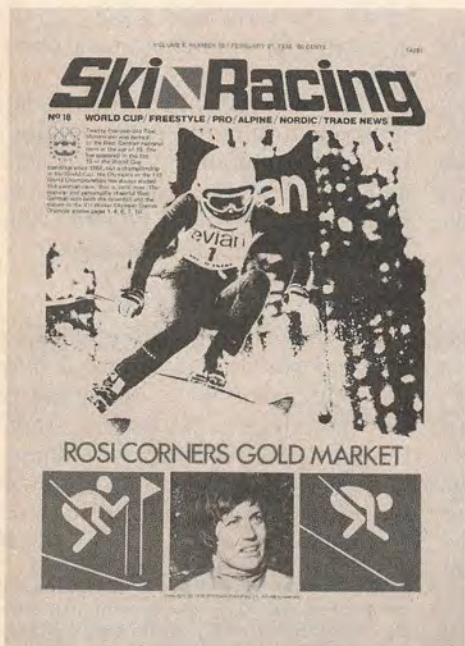
FRIDAY, JULY 30

Bruce Jenner won the decathlon

championship, with a magnificent performance that carried him far beyond the world record, and his wife, Chrystie, didn't do too badly either. Not only did she keep meticulous records, chronicling Jenner's assault on the world record, but she screamed, ("Faster, Jenner, faster!") and cried—and, in a beautifully impulsive act as memorable as Jenner's inspired 1,500-meter run, she stood near the finish line of that final decathlon event, tears streaming down her face, eyes focused on her husband, completely caught up in the drama until an



# What ever happened to Rosi and Franz?



Millions of Americans discovered the excitement of ski racing during the 1976 Winter Olympic Games at Innsbruck. Few will ever forget the daring downhill run of Austria's Franz Klammer or the remarkable gold medal performances by West Germany's cheerful Rosi Mittermaier. Yet, for these and a few dozen other world-class ski racers, Innsbruck was just one stop on a full season's schedule of international races. They call it the "weiss zirkus," the white circus. Officially, it's the World Cup. It involves a series of international races each winter that range from California to the Alps, or from Japan to Scandinavia. Now you can join in through the pages of the only ski publication that covers it all with stories, interviews and complete results and standings.

The publication is Ski Racing. In their "Super Sports" issue, Esquire magazine wrote: Ski Racing "offers devastatingly complete competition results, plus excellent features and technical articles. And considering the fact that it's a tabloid newspaper, it's damn handsomely done." (Thank you, Esquire.)

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# Olympics

CONTINUED

Olympic official moved between her and the television camera that was recording her reactions. Chrystie eased the official out of the camera's path with a speed and determination her husband would have envied.

Lasse Viren added the 5,000-meter championship, wrapping up the Woolworth double (5,000 and 10,000 meters) for the second straight Olympics, a feat accomplished previously by only two men: Viren's fellow Finn, Paavo Nurmi, and the Czech wizard, Emil Zatopek, both of whom had to get along with only the normal quota of blood. On Viren's 5,000-meter victory lap, he did not hold his sneakers over his head the way he did af-

ter the 10,000-meter run. The International Olympic Committee told him not to. The average fan thought Viren had just taken his shoes off the other day to rest his feet. The IOC suspected Viren was waving his shoes to fatten his wallet.

## SATURDAY, JULY 31

For the United States, the brightest facet of the 1976 Olympics was the performance of its boxing team, and in the Montreal Forum, American fighters collected five gold medals, two silver medals and one bronze medal. Two of the gold medalists—little Howard Davis and large Leon Spinks—seem likely to go on to profitable professional careers, but another two, Leon Ran-

dolph and Sugar Ray Leonard, said their gold medals marked the end of their careers. Most observers felt that Davis was the most gifted of the American fighters, but Sugar Ray was the best showman. He captivated everyone with his smile, so broad and so real he seemed to love all the spectators and even his opponents. He showered kisses on the spectators and punches on the opponents.

The finals provided chauvanists three *mano-a-mano* confrontations between Americans and Cubans, and in all three, the American fighter won. It was, I couldn't help thinking, Cuba's Bay of Pugs.

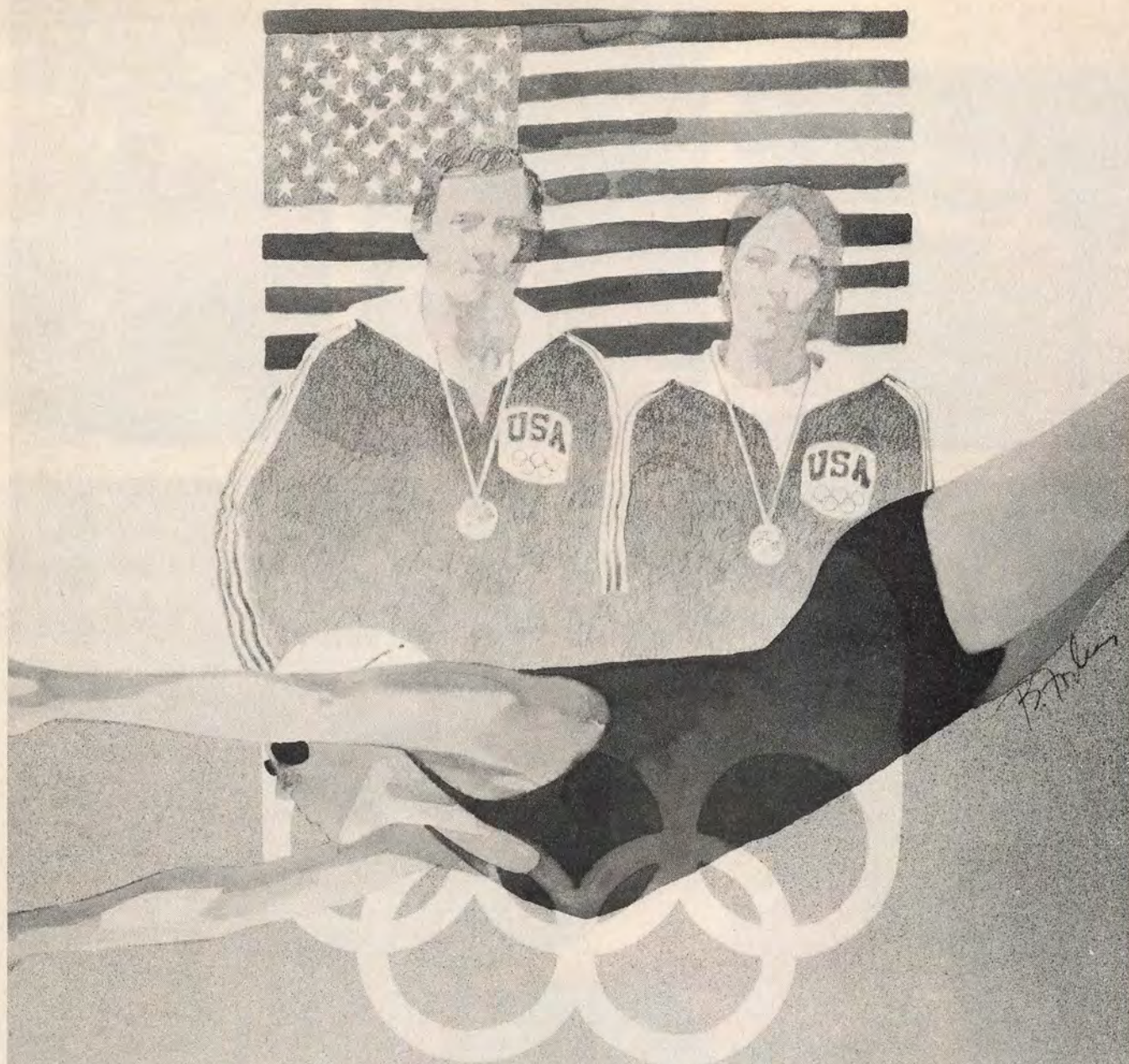
## SUNDAY, AUGUST 1

At the closing ceremonies, a bearded young man streaked onto the field, wearing not a shred of clothing. It was a terribly stupid thing for him to do. He should have at least worn athletic shoes, and he would have been paid for his performance. ■

**Bruce Jenner and Sugar Ray Leonard each turned his Olympic dream into reality, then announced that he was retiring.**







## 33 Medals in 26 Races. That's Performance.

This summer in Montreal, American swimmers beat the odds—again. Through the efforts of the United States Olympic Committee, they competed in the greatest swim meet in the world, against the greatest athletes in the world. As in past Olympics, they swam away with more medals than any other country.

In some of the most exciting moments of the Summer Games, American swimmers swept races, upset favorites and broke world records.

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# NIKI LAUDA:

## NUMBER 1 IN FORMULA 1

BY BARRY FARRELL

**T**he last time I saw Niki Lauda he was dressed in his electric-red fire suit, the one with the Marlboro patch on the shoulder, the ad for Agip across the chest, and a dozen other badges promoting products used in Formula One racing stitched on wherever a camera might catch them for the champion's victory wave. I wanted to ask him how it felt to face death in coveralls so cluttered with corporate graffiti.

But Lauda wasn't doing the waving that day. He had just lost his first race of the season at the Long Beach Grand Prix, finishing second to Clay Regazzoni, his Ferrari teammate, and the clerkish young Austrian champion was looking a little wan under his Goodyear cap. Even in losing he had the presence of mind to hold his bottle of Fiucci water so that the label would show.

For all I knew, Lauda relished being valued by his sponsors both as driver and sandwich-board man. He hadn't been amused when I remarked earlier that, with all its decals and insignia, his car resembled an around-the-world steamer trunk. This marvel of engineering, this twitchy red arrow that used almost 500 horses to pull 1,325 pounds (the equivalent of a VW bug with an 850-hp engine), looked like a bad stretch of highway along its sleek flanks.

The Italian national colors and Ferrari's venerable Prancing Horse of Modena had been reduced to modest scale to make room for Agip, Chronograph Heuer, Parmalat, Speedline, Roxill, SKF, Champion and the other products whose trademarks it carried. To see it coming at you in full song was to be assaulted by a 190-mile-an-hour Goodyear ad driven by a man whose helmet said Marlboro right above the eyes. It did not seem a suitably dignified chariot in which to flirt with the ragged edge.

Not that Lauda's car was any different from the others. Looked upon as a commercial event, the race had pitted six brands of gas and oil against three cigarettes, a sugar combine, a department store, a bank, two tool and instrument makers, and a British contraceptive. Commercial blight had become so commanding a fashion in racing circles that even the fans were dressed up in trademarks, and it seemed to me that the drivers had reason to resent the way their sport had been so gaudily defaced.

But Lauda seemed impatient and fatigued as a pack of motor-sports-writers closed in for a Formula Zero interview. Yes, he was glad Team Ferrari had won. No, he had no complaints about the way his Ferrari 312T had handled. The moment seemed unripe for a question that might have sounded morbid or irreverent, so I waited my chance to

ask Lauda for his phone number in Salzburg and let it go at that.

I tried calling before the Spanish Grand Prix and again after the Grand Prix of Monaco, where for the second year running Lauda kissed the hand of Princess Grace as he accepted the winner's cup. He had won four of the season's first six races and finished second in the other two, and there seemed little chance that anyone could prevent him from becoming the first Formula One driver to repeat as world champion since Jack Brabham in 1959 and 1960.

Indeed, Lauda seemed almost engineered to dominate an era of motor racing in which precision means far more than daring. The son of a wealthy paper-mill owner, he had bought his way into sports-car racing at 19, starting out in a Mini-Cooper, then graduating to a Porsche 911S. His father opposed his early enthusiasm for racing so strongly that Lauda concealed it from him until he started winning hillclimbs and getting his name in the papers, and when his father refused to support him if he persisted in his costly and dangerous habit, Lauda arranged to pay for it on his own. After two seasons of Formula V and Formula Three racing in Europe, he talked an Austrian bank into putting up \$20,000 to sponsor him in Formula Two in 1971. When the bank refused to finance him

Lauda and his moustachioed teammate Clay Regazzoni (top left) at the 1976 U.S. Grand Prix West in Long Beach, Calif.



# NIKI

CONTINUED

again the following year, he borrowed \$85,000 to step up to Formula One.

Lauda joined the March team on a "rent-a-ride" basis, and although he failed to score a point in Grand Prix racing, he won the British Formula Two championship and felt he had impressed the March owners enough for them to start paying for

**Lauda suffered third-degree burns after his crash at the German Grand Prix in August—and very nearly lost his life.**

his ride. But when March failed to find a sponsor for his car the following season, Lauda was dropped, and he spent most of the year driving a BRM. Although the BRM wasn't expected to accomplish much that year, Lauda managed to score his first Grand Prix points behind its wheel, and the relentless style of his driving caught the eye of Enzo Ferrari, the 82-year-old *Comandatore*, whose racing fortunes had long been in decline.

By midseason of 1974, Lauda was a strong contender for the championship, having won his first two Grand Prix races in the since-retired Ferrari 312B3. But mishaps and breakdowns plagued him through the summer, and he failed to finish any of his last five races. He spent the off-season testing and refining his car at the Ferrari track at Fiorano, logging hundreds of miles in


practice runs, deepening his rapport with the machine. The following year, driving Ferrari's 312 *transversale*—a three-liter flat-12 engine car with a transverse gearbox—he won at Monaco, in Belgium, Sweden and France, and the 68 points he scored brought Ferrari its first championship since 1964.

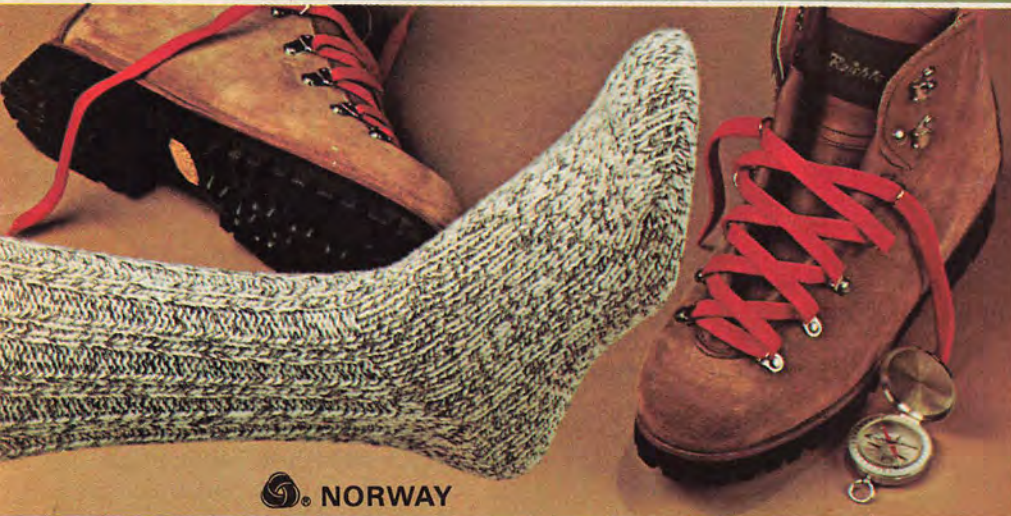
Frail, small, buck-toothed and blonde—Lauda was a far cry from such romantic figures as Fangio and Graham Hill. But he drove with a neat precision most of the others on the Formula One circuit would have learned much from observing—if only Lauda had kept in sight. Instead, he ran far ahead of the pack as the new season opened, winning in South Africa and again in Brazil. Between races, he practiced and tested in his determined, astronaut-like manner, honing ever sharper








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# NIKI

CONTINUED

the cybernetic connection between man and machine that is motor racing's special alchemy. "I am not the difference," he told reporters. "The engine is not the difference. The success of the Ferrari is the total package, the chassis, the engine and the driver taken together."

Those who found Lauda bloodless and without color had failed to take the full measure of his controlled skills, the implacable force of his dedication. When he was called a robot for his ice-cold, pas-

sion-free driving, Lauda was complimented. "The best driver might actually be a robot," he observed before the race at Long Beach. "A robot would drive always within itself and always to the limit of its machinery."

Then, after his win at Monaco, Lauda's luck turned sour. Team Ferrari was being hard pressed by James Hunt in his McLaren, and by Jody Schecter and Patrick Depailler in their revolutionary six-wheeled Elf Tyrrells. The six-wheelers had been the object of much humor when they were unveiled late last season, but they posted among the fastest laps their first few times out, and in their fourth time out, at the symmetrical, almost metronomic Swedish Grand Prix at Anderstorp, Schecter and Depailler finished first and second. Hunt, who had already won the Spanish Grand Prix, came on to win in France and Britain, and

Lauda's early lead, once so commanding, began to shrink to catchable size.

Pushed by the surprising competition, the Ferraris began developing gearbox and crankshaft troubles. At the French Grand Prix, Lauda's engine froze up on the eighth lap, forcing his first retirement in 17 races. But there remained seven more races in the long season, and the German Grand Prix at Nurburgring, long considered the supreme test for Formula One racers, was expected to figure decisively in the title run. Hunt's teammate, the German hero Jochen Mass, had crashed twice there last season, destroying two McLarens, and Lauda would have won the race but for a ruined front tire. The champion, however, approached this year's run with outspoken trepidation. "My personal opinion is that the Nurburgring is too dangerous to drive on nowadays," he told a British motor sports magazine in an interview published a week before the race. "I look at other circuits, where the safety facilities provide much easier, much safer driving, and I compare them to the Nurburgring, with one hundred and sixty mile-an-hour jumping—only God saves you."

A quarter of a million racing fans lined the 14.2-mile course in the Eifel mountains as the race began under a slight drizzle. Hunt, driving from the pole position, got off to an early lead, and when the weather began to clear, Lauda came into the pits on the second lap to change from wet to dry tires. Then he was off again, making up time, running his 312T2 to the limit of its machinery, driving as a robot would. As he approached a sharp left-handed turn called Bergwerk Corner about six-and-a-half miles from the starting line, he lost his left rear wheel, broke through the restraining fence, whirled back across the track and caught fire as two following cars piled into him.

Lauda was pulled from the wreck

**Lauda during a pit stop at the Watkins Glen Grand Prix in 1975—a victory that helped make him champion that year.**







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by Italian driver Arturo Merzario, Briton Guy Edwards and American Brett Lunger. But Lauda's lungs had been scalded by noxious fumes coming up through the life-support system that was meant to feed fresh air inside his helmet: It had pumped gasses released by the melting interior of his car. By the time he was out of the car, he had suffered second- and third-degree burns to his face and hands, as well as a brain concussion, a broken collar bone, and several lesser fractures. He was near death when they rushed him away.

Since Lauda's crash I have not been able to dismiss from mind an image of him strapped into his flaming car, with all his billboards burning. And, imagining his pain and ruined hopes, I cannot suppress the uneasiness I felt in Long Beach being surrounded by the champions of a sport whose principal fuels are avarice and corporate vanity. Lauda was still on the critical list when it was announced that his accident was not the result of any mechanical faults. The Goodyear tires had not blown. Ferrari craftsmanship had not failed. The champion had simply run off course, and while his life might have been in some doubt, there was nothing wrong with his machinery.

I'm certain that if I had managed to reach Lauda and ask him how he felt about wearing so many trademarks on his car and his silky, scientific jumpsuit, he would have defended the practice and said it was good for the sport. Formula One racing had suffered some lean years since the infamous Le Mans of 1955, where Pierre LeVegh stove his Mercedes into the crowd, killing

81; even into the early 1970s, the sport seemed to have lost its romantic vision, the sense of gentlemanly risk-taking conveyed in the old traditions of silk scarves and British racing green. Only the sponsorship of outside corporations made it possible for auto-builders to plunge ahead into the refinement of machines already near the limit of mechanical sophistication, and when Grand Prix racing began to boom again a few years back, the cars surrendered to the demands of promotion, all of them carrying more ads than an hour of early morning TV, some even painted to resemble big boxes of cigarettes or British contraceptives. One could root for the contraceptive car without quite making the connection, and it was possible to be in awe of a driver while remaining unpersuaded by all the trademarks that he wore. But one couldn't avoid the feeling that never had a sport been so defaced by those who sponsor and promote it, and never had more been asked of athletes, whose lives were always on the line, whose endorsements mattered, who weren't expected to be on the winners' stand without their brand names showing.

But the idea of dying inside a suit that said Marlboro and Parmalat and Agip still had a haunting sense of life demeaned, and it bothers me to think that Lauda came so close. One hears racing drivers talk about the ragged edge—the point where control gives way to disaster, where life meets death, where an instant's miscalculation slips beyond the formula for winning and staying alive: Maximum restraint with minimum loss of speed. "The Ragged Edge" is what Peter Revson called his boat, and Revson's fatal crash three years ago is only one among the many that give Grand Prix legends their tombstone ring.

Yet the idea of flirting with the ragged edge retains an allure that has nothing to do with a social death wish, or the other morbid explanations for the fascination with racing. The crowd does not come to see someone die. When the driver dies, the crowd dies with him—a mass

psychic death no one could wish to partake in. What attracts is the *flirtation*, the reaffirmation of life that comes from facing down death as close as you can come. And somehow when a man comes through this crucible and does it quick enough to win, one does not wish to see his moment diminished by all the products he's supposed to plug.

Lauda is so attuned to the demands of his sport that it would not surprise me to see him back next year with a new patch on his coveralls advertising Dr. Zellner's plastic-surgery clinic, where his face and hands were redone. He also might want to say a word about his insulated fire suit, the Nomex, Kynol and Kevlar compounds that most surely saved his life. But when Team Ferrari withdrew from Formula One racing following Lauda's crash and lodged protests against Hunt's victories in England and Spain, it struck me that the champion might be looking for a new ride next year, and I hope that whoever it is lets him test himself against the ragged edge with his dignity, and his fire suit, undiminished by the bragging of the businessmen who urge him on. ■

## THE SPORT QUIZ!

ANSWERS  
From page 18

1—a. 2—a. 3—c. 4—c. 5—a. 6—c.  
7—b. 8—a. 9—c. 10—b. 11—Gabriel-N.C. State; Reed-Mississippi State; Morrill-Michigan State. 12—a. 13—b. 14—b. 15—b. 16—a.

### PHOTO CREDITS

Dorothy Affa—8 (3), 79, 104. P. Crawford—39. Joe DiMaggio—90, 96 (top right), 98 (left). Malcolm Emmons—22. Kevin Fitzgerald—32 (inset), 36, 50, 100 (top right). Lewis Franck—100 (top left & top middle). Robert Harmeyer, Jr.—100 (bottom). Nancy Hague—74 (bottom right). Paul J. Sutton/DUOMO—95 (left). Tony Tomsic—70 (5), 74 (left), 74 (top right), 75 (left), 75 (top middle & bottom middle). UPI—7 (left), 16, 18 (right), 75 (right). Jerry Wachter—32 (background). Wide World—7 (right), 14, 18 (left & middle), 24, 95 (right), 96 (top left & bottom left), 96 (bottom right), 98 (right), 102 (2).



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# COLUMN ROBERT WARD

Jim Bouton is leaning on the armrest of the big brown sofa in the rehearsal hall in the CBS Broadcast Center, New York. Sweat is running down his nose, making canals through the lines near his mouth, and trickling down his neck. He looks as if he's just finished pitching to Murderers Row, or in the 1964 World Series. But Bouton hasn't earned his sweat on the mound. These days he spends nearly every waking hour writing, editing and acting in his new prime time TV show, *Ball Four*.

Now, as he catches a breather, he dissipates a little of the tension which is chewing up his stomach like green-fariged Peter Pain in the old Ben Gay commercials. Bouton laughs uproariously. For in front of him, lunatic comedian Lenny Schultz is running through his sidesplitting Big Bird routine. Schultz, (who portrays a player named Birdman on the Washington Americans—Bouton's TV team) pops out his eyes, throws back his neck, arches his spine and struts around the room like an ostrich on cocaine. Bouton's laughter seems a bit much, considering the fact that he's seen Schultz do this routine about 40 times in the last few days. But the over-reaction is understandable when you realize that Jim Bouton needs moments like this, little explosions of insanity which will relieve his own worries—which in these last days before the show goes on the air are considerable. Come Wednesday, September 22nd, *Ball Four* will go on CBS against *Little House on the Prairie* on NBC and *The Bionic Woman* on ABC.

It won't be easy for Bouton. And it won't be easy for Ben Davidson, who used to terrorize the National Football League, and who, as a rookie actor on the show, plays a stereotypical dumb jock named Rhino. Even Schultz, for all his comedic

brilliance, is a neophyte actor, and any show with three freshman actors is pushing against formidable odds.

Now Bouton smiles, and resumes a run-through of a scene in which he (Jim Barton on the show) tries to snatch a rookie pitcher from the jaws of a money-hungry woman who is after the young pitcher's \$150,000 bonus. Director Stan Lathan is patient with Bouton, telling him when to move, suggesting how he should respond to a cue, and though Bouton is a gracious and willing learner, the acting doesn't come easy. As I watch the men rehearse the scene about ten times, I talk with Jack Somack, a veteran character actor, who plays Cap Capogrosso, manager of the Americans.

"Jim's inexperienced, of course," Somack says. "I mean, let's face it. . . he doesn't emote a lot, and he is without the technical tricks which make a scene really pop. His only experience before this was in Altman's movie *The Last Goodbye*, and that's a different ball game than taping before a live audience. But Jim has improved. He's getting better every week."

On a break, the exhausted Bouton speaks just as candidly about his problems. "This is a lot tougher than any World Series game," he says, smiling and wiping his face with a towel. "I mean, the first time we went through the pilot, I was so bad, I just went back to the dressing room and cried. I thought: So many people's jobs are dependent on me. . . it's not just a matter of me being adequate. Here I've got to be really good. I've got to emote. . . learn camera angles. If I'm one or two inches away from my mark, then that's not good enough. It won't work properly. So I'm out there thinking of not blowing the cues, of getting my body at just the right

angle. Then I'm rushing off for last-minute story conferences. Plus, we only have a week to get it all together. What you are seeing here will be a live show in front of an audience in just five days. It's murder."

It looks tougher than murder to me. What the *Ball Four* boys are banking on is that the script will be so unlike any other sports show ever put on the tube, that the audience will forgive an occasional acting faux pas.

But even here, I have my doubts. At a question-asking session I attended, Bouton and Producer Don Segall stressed the "honesty of *Ball Four*." Both he and Segall were anxious to compare *Ball Four* to the anarchistic spirit of *M\*A\*S\*H*. Unfortunately, there is a rider attached to all this truth saying. Producer Segall, a chubby man with a beard, and a head which looks as if it has been shined by a bum from the Bowery, said: "We're going to give you all the honesty you can hope for . . . within the limitations of the Family Hour." He went on to say that the "Family Hour" shouldn't be a problem because "there are things even *M\*A\*S\*H* can't say."

Perhaps not. And perhaps there are ways to "tastefully suggest the truth." I hope so because I like Jim Bouton, and know how much the show means to him. And I think a show that concerns itself with the realities instead of the pieties of sport could be immensely important. All this stated, I must report that the episode of *Ball Four* I saw taped suffered from a state of terminal cuteness. It was about as offensive as *Mister Rodgers*, and a lot less charming. The situation—Jim Barton trying to get some rest but being conned into (gasp) drinking beer, watching girls, and playing cards—was less like *M\*A\*S\*H* than *Andy Hardy Meets The Yankees*. However, the second segment I viewed had some great bits in it. I reserve judgment and hope that the boys put it all together.

"I'm putting all I've got inside me into this project," Bouton told me. I believe him because Jim Bouton always gives it his best shot. Still he faces a labyrinth of problems, and if the show is a hit it will be the ex-Yankee star's greatest personal triumph. If not, maybe he can get a good book out of the whole thing. One that won't offend the delicate sensibilities of the millions of viewers who must be protected by the "Family Hour" from life's harsher realities.



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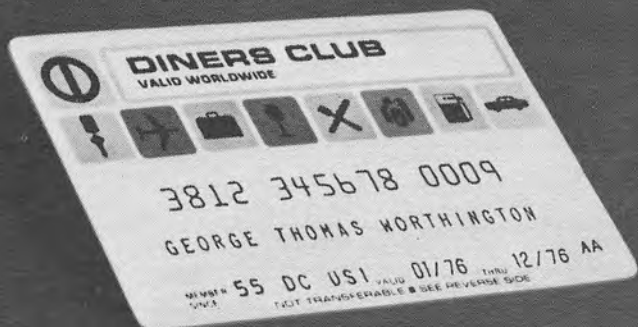
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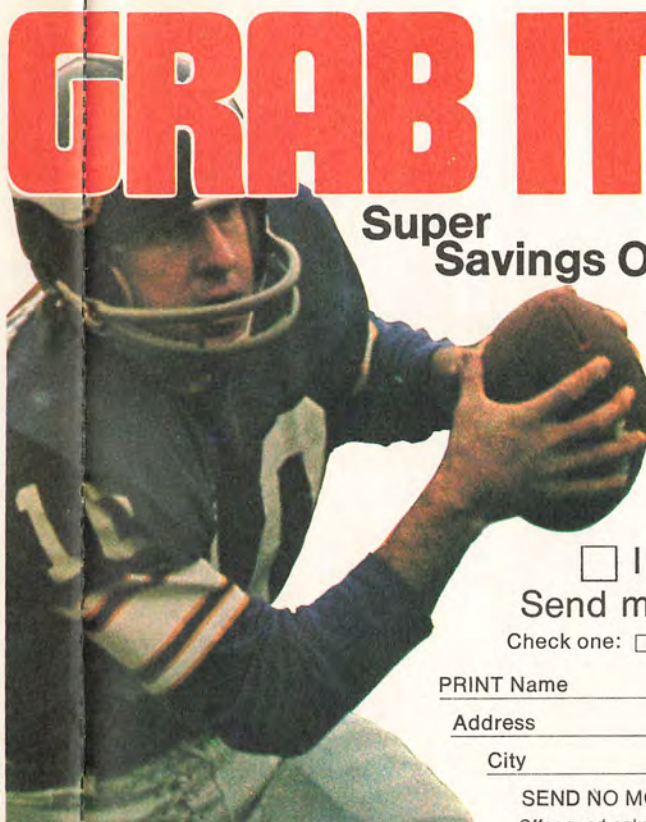
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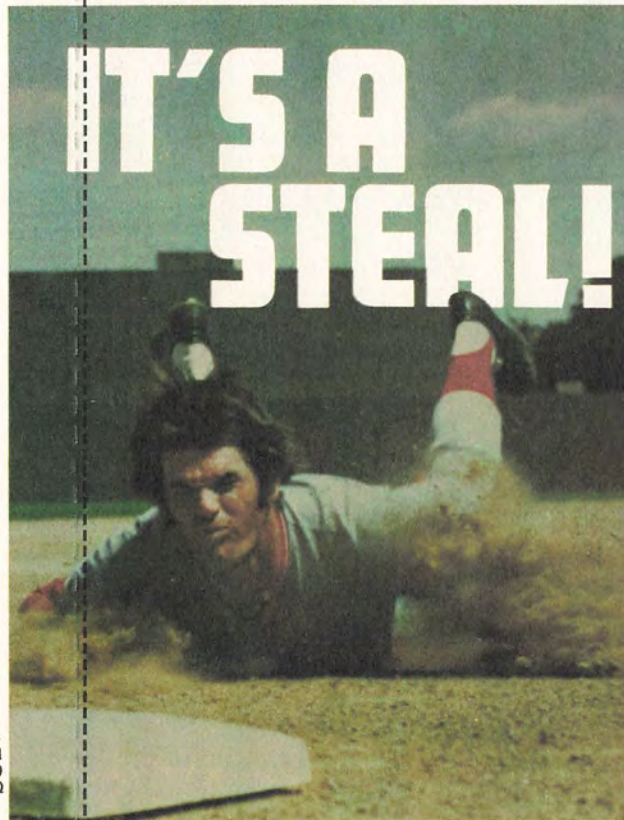
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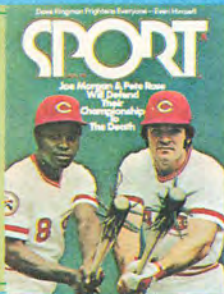
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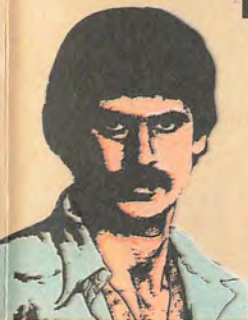
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